

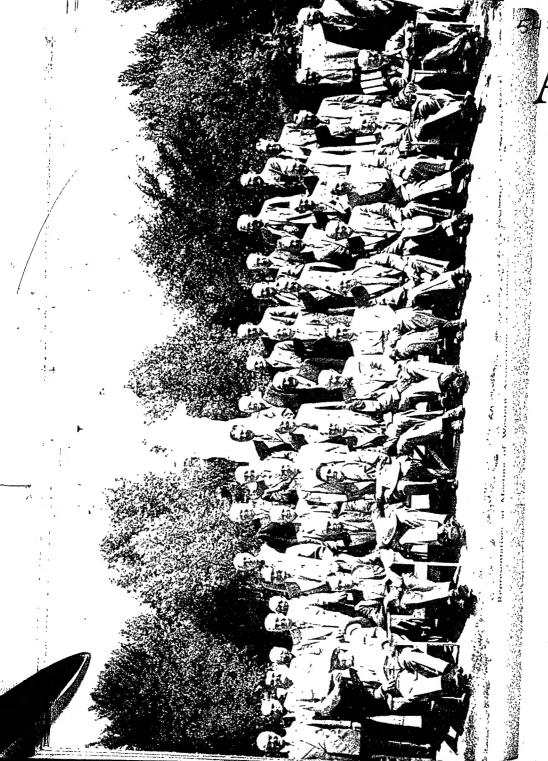
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## AGRICULTURE ON PARADE



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# AGRICULTURE ON PARADE

THE STORY OF THE FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS OF WESTERN CANADA

by Grant MacEwan

Thomas Nelson & Sons (Canada) Limited
Toronto

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By

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS (CANADA) LIMITED

1950

PRINTED AND BOUND IN CANADA
T. H. BEST PRINTING CO., LIMITED, TORONTO

#### TO MAT HASSEN

with a record of 37 years as manager, and all those other good and able Westerners who have managed the Fairs and Exhibitions through fair weather and foul, this effort is respectfully dedicated.

#### **FOREWORD**

The Exhibitions and Fairs have a story to tell. It is a story of achievement and one that should be recorded as a chapter in that unnamed, unwritten but greater work which we may for convenience call the Romantic Rise of Western Canada. The mid-point in the twentieth century seemed to be an appropriate time to make the review.

The proposal to assemble the information in book form was expressed at the Annual Meetings of the Western Association of Exhibitions and Western Canada Fairs Association, convening in Winnipeg in January 1950. The response in interest coupled with the willingness of the Exhibition and Fair executives to co-operate, practically compelled an immediate beginning.

This effort, therefore, feeble though it may be, is intended to recognize the progress in 75 years of Fairs and Exhibitions and point up some of the avenues through which those organizations, with agricultural betterment as their main purpose, may go forward.

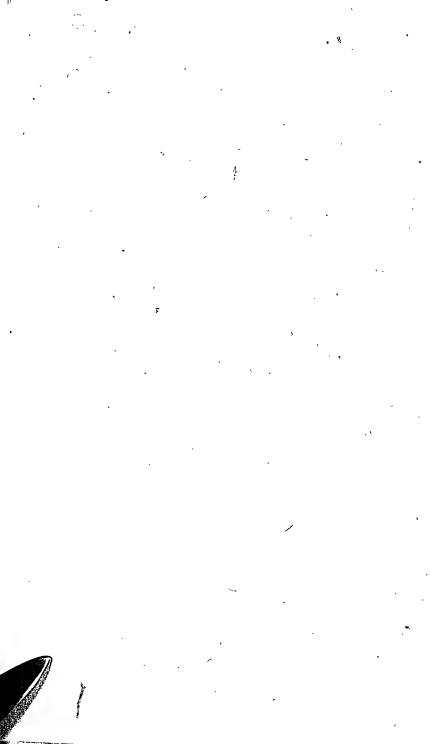
Many kind friends have assisted with information and illustrations. To name them all would be difficult, if not impossible, but to them I would say a collective "Thank you." Especially helpful have been the interest and assistance of Exhibition Managers, V. Ben Williams, S. C. McLennan, Charles Yule, James Paul, S. N. MacEachern and Thomas McLeod, also Mrs. Letta Walsh, Secretary of the Western Association of Exhibitions, Keith Stewart, Secretary of Western Canada Fairs Association, K. K. Warren of Manitoba Dept. of Mines and Natural Resources; J. L. Johnston, Provincial Librarian, John Curror, Miriam Green Ellis and Dr. J. B. Munro.

Grant MacEwan.

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#### CHAPTER I

## FAIR TRADITIONS

"A Fair is a cross-section of life. If you had only one day to spend in a country, you would be well advised to go to the Agricultural Fair if you wished to find out about the people. The exhibits tell their own story. You would see something of their education by their school exhibits; from the flowers and foods and manufactured goods you would be able to see something of the people's way of living and their ideas of beauty."

Nellie L. McClung.

COMPETITION IS A CONSTANT AND DYNAMIC FORCE IN THE world about us. It takes many forms, some of them cruel. Among the wild animals of field and forest, it is the fastest and smartest coyote that secures most food and it is the fastest rabbit that lives the longest and escapes becoming a coyote's breakfast.

In the business world, competition may be carried too far at times, but however that may be regarded, the competitive stimuli present on the playing field, in the classroom and in the contests of the fair are vehicles on which progress rides forward. It is this form of competition that led to better products, higher efficiency about farms and factories, a higher standard of living and many of the achievements of which Canadians may be proud. Without it, farm implements in use today would be primitive; the breeds of livestock would be inferior and crops ill suited to their environment.

The urge to excel is inherent in most people. Directed with decency and fairness, it is a laudable characteristic, explaining much in human advancement. Such competition hurts no one unless it be the individual who has no interest in progress.

From the beginning of settlement in Western Canada, the Agricultural Fair or Exhibition furnished invigorating competition, a worthwhile exchange of ideas and a welcome change of scenery. Perhaps the pioneer fair had a bigger part in community life than its more modern counterpart has. It furnished practical benefit and it provided fun at a time when there were comparatively few alternative sources of either.

Fair day was achievement day and there was no better time and place to estimate community advancement. The farmer brought his pedigreed bull and his best team of horses in freshly polished harness. In the wagon were samples of his choicest seeds and vegetables, Aunt Martha's ancient oil painting, Willie's Grade IV composition book and perhaps a firkin of butter. It was Mother's fair, too, and she displayed huge loaves of homemade bread, dried apricot pies, fancy cookies loaded with raisins and needlecraft that represented the work of long and perchance lonely evenings. The local handiman submitted new gadgets and equipment, the products of an inventive mind and, for good measure, he added a work of art in the form of a miniature sailboat, expertly constructed within a medicine bottle.

It was a public demonstration as well as a competition and no boast made from the floor of the local livery stable could be considered valid unless the author was prepared to submit to the court of the annual fair. The pioneer community needed a fair.

Early settlers in Western Canada had some advanced ideas about agricultural fairs. The benefits in terms of community progress must have appeared very clear because such institutions were regarded as necessities more than luxuries. In a significant number of instances, an agricultural fair was the first fruit of local organization. At Portage la Prairie, the first important organization was a Caledonia Society and the next was an Agricultural Society, which almost immediately produced a fair. Portage la Prairie had a fair before it had a railroad as did Victoria, New Westminster, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Crystal City, Carman and a lot of other western points.

Fairs are ancient institutions and almost every civilized country had them in one form or another: trade fairs, religious

had some knowledge of the Fairs of Tyre; he mentioned trading in horses and mules and such products as honey, wheat, silver, iron, tin and lead. Even the "Women's Work Department" was included at Tyre, where broidered work and fine linen were listed. If the whole story were known, no doubt there was a class for "baking powder biscuits", or something equally important.

Certainly the Greeks and Romans conducted fairs and passed the idea along to their northern neighbors. Aix-la-Chapelle and Troyes had brilliant European trading fairs at the time of Charlemagne and had that great leader's enthusiastic support. It is to be hoped that the convenor of the fair's reception committee did not neglect to present the Ruler with a patron's badge or invite him to have lunch in the directors' tent.

A good deal of the commerce of the country was transacted at those fairs. One of Europe's most noted fairs operating from the 14th century was Nijni-Novgorod in Russia. It, too, was dedicated to trade.

England, from whom Canada inherited many of its agricultural fair ideals, is known to have had fairs in some form from the time of King Alfred the Great. When the absent-minded Alfred let the precious cakes burn, who knows but that he was thinking about the forthcoming fair, rather than the invading Danes. Indeed, it has been suggested that the Romans who followed Caesar introduced the idea to the Britons.

At one time, an English churchyard was a favorite location for a fair and King Edward I tried rather unsuccessfully to change the locale. Changing it wasn't so easy and in 1368 a high ranking archbishop made a ruling, not against the use of churchyards for fairs and markets, but, against their use for such purposes on Sundays.

England's most noted were the St. Bartholomew Fair at Smithfield, which began in the year 1102 and the Stourbridge Fair at Cambridge, dating to 1211. Both were functioning but declining during the first half of the last century and by 1855 they had ceased. The Lee Horse Fair of Yorkshire was another with a record of service covering more than 600 years.

The purpose in most cases was trade but when people came together to worship, to celebrate or to trade, entertainers came also and such gatherings developed a diverseness of character. Puppet shows, dancers and horse races were offered a attractions and thither went the gypsy caravans. Markets were prolific parents, begetting "market fairs", trade fairs and finally "agricultural fairs." The value of the newer types of English fairs was recognized but the possibility of abuses was seen also and after the middle of the 19th century, England provided legislation for their regulation and control.

London gave the lead in International Exhibitions and staged the historic Crystal Palace Exhibitions in 1851. It was organized by the Society of Arts and opened by Queen Victoria. It may have been the first time, too, that the word "Exhibition" was used to describe an ambitious fair. Anyway, the London Exhibition was seen as an incentive to trade and commerce and other countries were quick to follow. A World's Fair was held in New York in 1853 and one in Paris in 1855.

Exhibitions of the World Fair order were held in the United States from time to time. One of the most ambitious was the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893, commemorating 400 years from North America's discovery. Attendance was estimated at 28 millions and through it, millions of people learned about advances in the use of electricity. The Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904 was one that attracted Canadians, as did also the fabulous "Century of Progress" at Chicago in 1933 and 1934. Perhaps England's most successful effort in International shows was the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924 and 1925. The first International Trade Fair in Canada was held in 1948, with 1400 exhibits from 28 different nations and visitors from 70 countries.

But the Old World Fairs, whose influence was felt most strongly in Western Canada, were those having agricultural importance. Canadian fairs inherited their character from the agricultural fairs of England and Scotland. At the beginning of the 19th century, when livestock was assuming more importance in British agriculture, many of the market fairs of the Old Country lost their purchase and sale feature and became competitive institutions.



Robert Bakewell had done marvelous things in animal improvement by employing what society of that day would call the shameful practice of close breeding. But, in spite of public scorn, his methods were copied and livestock husbandry made notable advances. The nation's stock improved and new breeds emerged.

With so much new interest in cattle and other livestock, there was a natural demand for fairs at which breeds could be studied and merits demonstrated. The fairs of that period did more than anything else to fix breed type. They furnished a uniform objective and with their aid, England and Scotland went on to a place of preeminence in the international realm with cattle, horses, sheep and pigs.

Breed history rings with references to animals that achieved showyard distinction. The fair was the testing ground and it helped to screen the animals for breeding. Winners at those early shows in Britain might be strange monstrosities by today's standards but they were the acknowledged best in their time and represented the inevitable steps in the evolutionary rise to modern forms.

We read, for example, of the Tully-bred Herefordshire steer, standing six feet, seven inches in height, (19% hands, to the horsemen) winning first at the Smithfield Fat Stock Show in 1799. If Ed. Noad's champion steer from the 1949 Canadian Royal could have been placed alongside, the contrast would be so great that even the Herefordshire ox would have suffered from fright.

In time the Herefordshire ox was followed by the thicker, Durham ox that toured the English fairs at a weight of 3780 pounds commanding admiration that came with public approval. Then came the "White Heifer That Travelled", shown at the English fairs at a mere 2300 pounds. Although the was smaller than the Durham ox, she was a mountain of at and her outline showed huge lumps and depressions that would be considered unsightly and objectionable by modern show ring standards. But type ideals crystallized around those cattle as they were singled out in competitions.

There was one large depression in the middle of the White heifer's back, for which the thirsty and sentimental cattlemen found a use. Each time the heifer scored a show ring triumph,

they celebrated by filling the depression in her back with pund or rum. Then the herdsmen gathered around and sucked the liquid and a few white cow hairs through the straws until the hide was dry.

When the breeders of Old England issued challenges, the showyard was the acknowledged testing ground. There was Price of Hereford fame, for example, challenging the breeders in all England to bring out a better "bull and 20 regular breeding, in-calf cows", bred by the exhibitor. The stakes, announced the sporting Price, were to be £100. In this instance there were no takers and Price was satisfied that he had the best-cattle.

The Booths of English Shorthorn fame were ardent showmen. They settled many a dispute, in the show ring, and lost some of their wagers, too. One reads about the Booths challenging the immortal Thomas Bates of Kirklevington to show his best cow at the English Royal at York in 1842, saying that they had "a rod in pickle for him." Bates accepted the challenge, walked his cow, "Old Brokenleg", forty miles and won the competition. Bates on the same occasion won with his bull, Duke of Northumberland, and considered it a high point in his cattle breeding career.

Bates was not hindered by over-much modesty and when he sent pictures of the winning bull and cow to the editor of an English magazine, he expressed sentiment such as might be heard from some weary fair manager,—

"I do not expect that any artist can do them justice. They must be seen, and the more they are examined, the more their excellence will appear to a true connoisseur, but there are few good judges . . . . . a hundred men may be found to make a Prime Minister for one fit to judge of the real merits of Shorthorns."

While the Hereford was being transformed from a leggy, draught animal, to an approved butcher's type, and the Shorthorn and Aberdeen Angus were being remade, the fairs were aiding in the moulding of other breeds. On that Eden-like Channel Island where the Jersey breed originated, show ring competitions began about 1833 when the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society was organized. The Society



shows. On Jersey Island the shows were of two kinds, Parish or District Shows and Society or Island Shows. Winners from the small shows went to the bigger shows and competitions for Island championships created as much interest as a Provincial election in Saskatchewan.

In like manner, the show ring aided improvement of the Belgian breed of horses in its native Belgium and the Percheron in its native France. In Belgium, provincial shows were held for more than a century and, after 1874, winners converged upon a National Show at Brussels.

In England with its multiplicity of breeds, the Royal Agricultural Society Show has been the highest court. It was founded in 1839 and held its first meeting in Mr. Pinfold's seven acre pasture field at the old University town of Oxford. Today, Mansfield College occupies that site. The English Royal has no permanent location, being moved from one part of England to another each year. Since 1839, it has been held in 45 different towns and has operated annually except for two breaks occurring during the two World Wars.

Its counterpart north of the Tweed was the Highland Society Show, that originated with the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland in 1783. The Highland Show of 1949 was the 110th and had a record attendance of 163,917. Aberdeen Angus breeders particularly have used the testing ground of the Highland Show for well over a hundred years.

In Canada, the Province of Nova Scotia was first with an agricultural fair. Moreover, that fair held at Windsor, under Royal Charter in 1765, was the first on the North American Continent. For the best cow the prize was a butter churn; for the best sheep, a pair of shears; for the biggest display of cattle, three yards of English broadcloth, and for the best horse, a whip and pair of spurs. Reading, Writing and Wrestling were the educational essentials at the time and the pioneer fair included a Wrestling Tournament with a lace hat for first prize, a pair of shoes and buckles for second, and buckskin gloves for third.

Ontario encouraged fairs and exhibitions and made them a vital force in the life of that province. They had a lot to do with the advancement that was so conspicuous in Ontario flocks

and herds. The earliest organization to produce a fair in Uppe Canada seems to have been Niagara Agricultural Society founded about 1792. Twenty-six years later the Legislatur of Lower Canada voted to provide assistance to district agricultural societies, and in 1830 the Government of Upper Canada voted £100 for the encouragement of agricultural societies. By 1840 there were fairs at York, Guelph, Ottawa Port Hope, Cobourg, Brantford, Hamilton and several other places. At first these were one-day fairs but when they were extended to three days the pattern was usually, judging of crop and livestock the first day, a ploughing match the second and horse races the third.

The fair held in Toronto in 1846, under the auspices of the Agricultural Association of Upper Canada was the parent of the modern exhibition that brought fame to that city. Toronto's fair made exceptional growth and today, as the Canadian National Exhibition, it is acknowledged to be the biggest and best of its kind in the world. In scope it is not quite as national as its name but for two weeks each autumn, "the Ex." can demonstrate a blend of agriculture and industry that would bring pride and inspiration to the citizens of any country. Attendance at the "Ex." of 1950 was a record, 2,723,000.

Thus the settlers of the new West were able to bring some ideas about fairs with them. The first fair west of the Red River was at Victoria, on Vancouver Island in 1861, six years before Confederation, ten years before British Columbia joined the Dominion. There were several other fairs at or near the Pacific Coast between that date and the time of the first fair in the midwest. The first prairie fair was at Fort Garry in 1871 and in the next year Portage la Prairie lit a torch that was to give light to settlers and many another ambitious agricultural society.

#### CHAPTER II

## VICTORIA WAS FIRST AND NEIGHBOURS FOLLOWED

"If a man has good corn, or wood, or boards, or pigs to sell, or can make better chairs or knives, crucibles or church organs, than anybody else, you will find a broad, hard-beaten road to his house, tho it be in the woods."

Emerson.

SELKIRK SETTLERS WHO MADE HOMES IN THE RED RIVER Valley were the real pioneer farmers of the West, but the next settlement having an agricultural character was at the Pacific Coast. A moderately vigorous agriculture developed about Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia River and there the Hudson's Bay Company secured much of the food provisions required for its coastal posts.

But after the Oregon Treaty of 1846, when the boundary between British and United States territory was fixed, Fort Vancouver was alienated from Britain; it was on "the other side of the Border." With new interest and fresh hope, inspired eyes turned to the struggling agriculture being attempted about Fort Victoria, at the south end of Vancouver Island. The Hudson's Bay Company agreed that this area must become the main source of agricultural food supplies for the British Coast.

In the hope that colonization and farming would be fostered, the Imperial Government turned Vancouver Island over to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1849. But notwithstanding pious hopes, agriculture responded slowly and in 1856, there were not more than 300 farmsteads on the Island and none on the Mainland in British Territory.

The Gold Rush changed many things. It brought thousands

of fortune-seekers to Victoria and the Mainland, and some them remained to farm. The increased population created; better market for agricultural products and for the first time farming appeared attractive.

It was during the period of the Gold Rush, that the fir fair in all the West was held at Victoria. The date was October 2nd, 1861, and the President was Dr. W. F. Tolmie, who gets the credit for having introduced the dahlia to the West Coast and who was the father of Hon. Simon F. Tolmie, one time Premier of British Columbia. Among the directors was black-whiskered and eccentric Amor De Cosmos, the man who founded the British Colonist in Victoria and later had a term as Premier of his province.

The Victoria Market on Fort Street had a new brick building and there the pioneer fair was held. With artistic tasts that has since characterized the Victoria people, the building was decorated for the occasion, using chiefly the recently introduced and fashionable dablia.

According to the British Colonist, the judges were expected to begin their work at 7 a.m. and to be finished by 10 a.m. Perhaps judges are at their best at an early morning hour and certainly an early beginning is conducive to exhibition efficiency, but if early rising was ever a Victorian habit, the citizens of that fair city have displayed an amazing reversal in form.

Admission charges seem difficult to understand. Wm. I. Bonavia, who was Secretary of the British Columbia Fairs Association for many years, told that from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., admission was one dollar and thereafter, no charge. It would seem that visitors were not wanted until late in the day and the dollar charge was a penalty more than an admission fee.

An auction sale was planned for the mid-afternoon but few farmers wished to sell their exhibits and the sale was cancelled. There was band music, however, good music from H.M.S. Topaz, floating at anchor nearby, and finally there was an evening banquet at Ringo's Hotel, with 60 people attending.

That fair did something for Victoria. Farmers were reassured and visitors caught a glimpse of what could be grown. The fruit display surprised everybody it seems, and showed promise that within a few years, the colony would not be

dependent upon Oregon for its fruit. About grains on display the newspaper comment was:

"Judging from the quality and quantity of cereals we have not the smallest hesitation in saying that this colony can feed itself, providing our farmers were enterprising enough to raise grain in greater quantities."

Governor Douglas, whose authority covered both Vancouver Island and the Colony of British Columbia at that time, shared this view. The directors were encouraged. The idea of an annual fair was accepted.

Much as Victoria people hate to admit that they ever have bad weather, the second fair, in 1862, was almost a failure on that account. A change of site in the third year also had a bad effect. In 1864, the fair was back on Fort Street, in an enclosure adjacent to the old Hudson's Bay Company Fort, below Government Street. It was the beginning of ever better fairs. Governor Douglas retired from his post in this year and instead of going overseas or to Upper or Lower Canada, he settled down to devote his time to his fruits, gardens and livestock. For the new interest that people shared for growing plants and animals in that area, the Victoria Fair was given most of the credit.

Fire destroyed most of Victoria's Exhibition buildings in December, 1907, but there was some insurance and for the show of 1908, there were \$85,000 worth of new buildings. The organization behind the Victoria Fair became incorporated as the British Columbia Industrial and Agricultural Association and operated almost continuously except for interruptions caused by two World Wars when buildings were occupied by military forces.

New Westminster was the second point at which a fair was held in Western Canada and can claim the record of having the first event of its kind on the mainland. Organization started in 1863 and the first fair was held in a big shed at the corner of Carnarvon and McKenzie Streets, in 1865. The value of prizes totalled \$327 and attendance was 500. Everybody for miles around must have been at the fair.

The high sounding name of Royal Agricultural and Indus-

trial Society was adopted and for many years this organization held the leading fair in British Columbia. Its grounds, over looking the Fraser River and commanding a delightful vier of the mountains, were big and beautiful and about them were productive agricultural acres with diversified crops. By 1897 the New Westminster fair was showing the products of new industries, dairying and fruit farming and drawing many tourists. Of the fair in that year, the Farmer's Advocate wrote:

"The display of fruit at this show afforded indisputable evidence of the suitableness of the climate and the capability of the soil to produce the finest varieties of apples, pears, plums, grapes and peaches. It is quite equal in all but the last two to what we have seen at Toronto, while the apples struck us as being larger and finer than any we have seen in the East."

New Westminster became a leader in the province's attempt to attract immigrants. It was out to demonstrate that the Lower Mainland was the best mixed farming country in the world, that the

"district of Ladner can grow more tons of oats per acre than any hot-bed in Saskatchewan; that Surrey can grow anything from peanuts to elephants,"

and even though the land did sell at \$600 per acre, it was worth that for the weather on it alone. So said New Westminster and it spoke with loudest voice through its exhibition.

The District Competitions sponsored by the New West-minster Society constituted the most distinctive feature through the years. Rivalry was at the International Football level. It meant much to an ambitious district to win with its composite exhibit of grasses, grains, vegetables, fruits, livestock and anything about which the local real estate agents and farmers had a desire to brag. Kelowna won the coveted award in 1900, and was followed by Kamloops and Agassiz. Next year the winner was Chilliwack with a display of grains, vegetables, raw fruits, preserved fruits, eggs, dairy products and tobacco.

The crest of New Westminster's fame was reached in 1905 when it had the Dominion Exhibition and the \$50,000 Federal

grant that went with it. It was a gay occasion. There were parachute jumps from balloons, lacrosse and Indians by the thousands, some of whom arrived by canoe and took part in the war-canoe races. But wisely, the Royal Society featured its already famous inter-district competitions and made a notable display of resources in minerals, timber, fish and agriculture. Langley District won and others in order of awards were Richmond, Armstrong, Burnaby, Saanich, Chilliwack, Vernon, Kamloops, Coquitlam, Ashcroft, Salmon Arm, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Edmonton and Strathcona. The British Columbia districts were out to convince the aging men everywhere in Canada, that if they wanted "to sit under their own peach trees and smoke cigars from home grown tobacco", the west province was the best place. Evidently the demonstrations were convincing, although they still import cigars!

where in Canada, that if they wanted "to sit under their own peach trees and smoke cigars from home grown tobacco", the west province was the best place. Evidently the demonstrations were convincing, although they still import cigars!

There was a monster showing of dairy cattle. A. B. Potter of Saskatchewan had the grand champion Holstein bull and J. M. Steves of Steveston, the grand champion Holstein female.

Mrs. S. Knight of Sardis won the championship for Ayrshire bulls and A. C. Wells & Son of Chilliwack the same for Ayrshire cows. For years thereafter, New Westminster could claim Western Canada's best competition in dairy cattle. Some of the nation's leading herds were founded thereabouts. As one examines the records of that show, the pages of 1910 will be found to mention the name of "P. H. Moore, B.S.A., dairy expert and judge of butter." Forty years later it could be said that nobody in Canada had done more for dairy cattle improvement than "Pete" Moore, whose great work at nearby Colony Farm won world wide admiration.

A disastrous fire in 1930 robbed the city of its fair buildings and New Westminster dropped its annual Exhibition programme. Some day, so we are promised, New Westminster with rich agricultural fair traditions will return to offer the Fraser Valley an Annual Exhibition. Next time, the Society may not attempt to have the biggest directorate in Canada and may be satisfied with something less than 250 directors.

There are points of interest surrounding the beginnings of most fairs in Western Canada. The Cowichan Fair on Vancouver Island, had its origin in a Harvest Festival, held under church auspices in 1868. A little parish school built among

the oaks, near St. Peter's Church at Quamichan was the sit It furnished evident inspiration because on October 17th of that year, the good citizens living around Duncan organize the Cowichan, Saltspring and Chemainus Agricultural Society Archdeacon W. S. Reece was president and a committee was appointed to select a site for an agricultural hall and a fair grounds. In the following summer a request for a piece of land near Maple Bay was presented to the government Immediately the Agricultural Society voted \$50 for fencing of the two-acre plot of ground and \$30 to finance tables and tent.

For years the Cowichan show combined the qualities of a Thanksgiving Festival and an Exhibition. Among its arden supporters were William A. Smithe, who became premier of British Columbia, and Father Rondeault, through whose efforts the first stone church on Vancouver Island was built. The history of the old stone church standing on Komiaken Hill near Cowichan, is interwoven with that of the Agricultural Society. Construction began a few months after the Society was formed and it came to be called the "butter church" because Father Rondeault operated a dairy farm nearby and sold butter to pay for the labour to build it.

Here was an active society, one fully alive to the service it was capable of rendering. In 1871 an agricultural hall was being erected and with the idea of achieving better distribution of livestock and seeds, an annual sale was held in conjunction with the fair. And that was not all. On October 9, 1878, after correspondence with breeders in Oregon, a committee was named to propose a plan by which purebred Shorthorn bulls might be brought to the settlement.

The Cowichan people were not satisfied with the crop varieties being grown and the Society went on record as favoring the importation of newer kinds:

".... in the opinion of the executive, it is highly advisable that choice kinds of seeds, roots, etc., be imported direct from England to be open to purchase by members of the Association at cost price on arrival."

Many new and useful plants of economic importance were

introduced by these enterprising people. Cereals, peas, clover and grass seed were brought in and distributed. But as one might fear, some of the introductions were found to have dangerous tendencies. Dr. J. B. Munro, retired Deputy Minister of Agriculture for British Columbia, had drawn attention to the introduction of the oxy-eye daisy by the well meaning Pimbury Brothers, who settled near Duncan in the late sixties. These young men longed for the sight of daisies as they knew them in boyhood years in England and they imported the seed and planted it in the meadows, little knowing that the innocentiocking plants were to be the forebears of some of the worst weeds in that part. Dr. Munro (in a letter of Feb. 16, 1950) adds:

"You will recall of course that the number one weed on Vancouver Island and many coastal areas is the Scots broom that was brought here as a cultivated plant and the first six seeds of it were sown by Captain William Calhoun Grant, (of the Scots Greys Regiment) who secured the seed from a gentleman living on the Hawaiian Islands. These six seeds thrived and all the successive generations of broom have been similarly thriving in the outlaying parts of Vancouver Island."

Anyone peering into Agricultural Hall at Maple Bay about the year of British Columbia's entry into Confederation, might have seen the judge of flowers, with sweat upon his brow, trying to decide which display of ox-eye daisies or which vase of Scots broom deserved first prize. Such was one of the errors that went with experience and progress and the marvel is that there were not more rather than fewer such mistakes.

Saanich Agricultural Society followed hard upon the heels of Cowichan and in 1948, both fairs celebrated 80th anniversaries. An unbroken record of annual fairs for so long a period calls for the highest commendation. Through the later years, Saanich laid first claim upon Labour Day for its annual show; the horse show, sports, Highland piping, livestock, fruits and regetables attracted large crowds from Victoria and neighboring municipalities.

The agricultural organization behind Chilliwack's Annual

Class "B" fair was incorporated in May, 1874. Situated as it at the heart of an important dairy district, it is no surprise the Chilliwack's fair excels in Holstein, Jersey, Ayrshire and Guernsey compition. And in the junior Dairy Calf Child contests, Chilliwack has established records and won the praise of workers across the continent.

From information furnished by Wm. J. Bonavia, the Surrey Fair began in 1888, Richmond in 1891, Courtney in 1893. Mission in 1894 and Kamloops in 1895. With the exception of New Westminster, those early British Columbia fairs continue to function. In the case of Kamloops, the Annual Bull Sales, and the Fat Stock Shows have more or less overshadowed the summer fairs.

In September, 1950, the Interior Provincial Exhibition at Armstrong in the Okanagan Valley, celebrated its Golden Jubilee and could look back upon an unbroken record of annual fairs. The original show in 1900 comprised little more than exhibitions of fruit and vegetables and was held in the back part of a local store. After a few years, livestock classes were added and in 1913, with funds available for barns, the association called for tenders. Contractors were not asked to submit prices on the proposed barns; rather they were asked to state how many linear feet of barns they would build for the money available. "We have \$4,700"; announced the Fair Board, "how many feet of barn will you build for that?" The builder who offered 500 feet of horse barns and 100 feet of cattle barn, was given the contract.

Through most of its half century of service, Armstrong Fair was guided by that Son of Old Ireland and master in the arts of auctioneering and showmanship, Manager Mat Hassen. When he became Manager in 1914, the exhibits were mostly draught horses, and judging ring arguments were many, as there were on show about 100 horses and only 15 cattle, (including one bull for which the pedigree certificate was missing), six pigs, 20 sheep, 50 chickens and some fruits, vegetables and grains mostly not of exhibition calibre. Armstrong's Golden Jubilee event and Manager Mat Hassen's 37th fair, was strikingly different with livestock telling a story of steady improvement, the boys' and girls' classes bespeaking educational opportunities, displays telling about diversification of agricul-

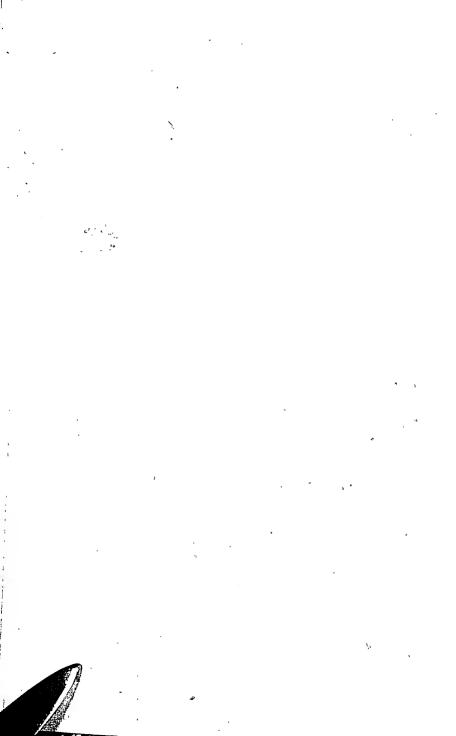
ture and industry, and the fruits and vegetables reminding all that the Okanagan Valley had no superior in the production of such products. The Armstrong fair speaks for Okanagan. It speaks of McIntosh Red Apples that have become symbols in good merchandising, of celery which is the "best in the world" according to Mat Hassen, the Armstrong cheese which is best in Canada" according to people thereabout, and fellowship unsurpassed. And Armstrong has another boast, its fair grounds, surrounded by hills and covered with green. No fair organization anywhere has a lovelier setting.

The Pacific National Exhibition at Vancouver began in 1910 and grew to be the second biggest thing of its kind in Canada.

But that is another story and treated elsewhere.

British Columbia has about 50 incorporated Agricultural Societies and most of the fairs and exhibitions can show outstanding displays of flowers, vegetables and fruits, emphasizing the importance of these in the provincial economy and suggesting further development in processing of vegetables and fruits, growing of flower and vegetable seeds and producing bulbs.

British Columbia's fairs have served long and well but in their character they have appeared different from the institutions on the prairies. They were less noisy and more restful, less mechanical and more biological. They mirrored as they were supposed to do, the needs of the countryside and the economy of the province.



#### CHAPTER III

## PORTAGE LED THE PRAIRIE PARADE

"I hear the tread of nations, Of empires yet to be; The dull low wash of waves where yet Shall roll a human sea"

Whittier.

OF THE MID-WESTERN FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS OPERATING today, Portage la Prairie has the longest record of service. The Portage show of 1872 was not the first. Winnipeg could claim an honest but abortive effort one year earlier. There was nothing spasmodic about the Portage la Prairie undertaking however. From the very beginning it reflected the determination of square-jawed pioneers who formed the parent organization, the Marquette Agricultural Society.

Indeed Portage la Prairie community had two advantages from the beginning, good soil and the stalwart citizens who settled on it. The initial fair mirrored the personalities of first president, Kenneth McKenzie; first white settler, John McLean who came in 1862 and bought land on which the city stands, paying a half-breed three hundred and seventy-five dollars in gold for it; first homesteader Jock Sanderson; member of the first Legislative Council of Manitoba, Francis Ogletree; pioneer sheep breeder, Donald Stewart, and first western breeder of pedigreed Shorthorns, Walter Lynch. And everyone in that notable collection exhibited at the first fair.

They were men who refused to be intimidated by Indians and refused to be beaten by frontier hardships. They were there to stay and they instilled the spirit of determination and continuity into the Marquette Agricultural Society that was organized on May 30, 1872. With Kenneth McKenzie as

president of that pioneer organization was Charles Mair a secretary.

Portage la Prairie had a population of three hundred le had a stage-coach service to Winnipeg and it had big idea Plans were made to hold a fair on September 25th but a stort occurred and the show was postponed to October 16th. In the very first issue of the Manitoba Free Press, published November 9th, 1872, the editor notes, "We sent for a prize list of this show, (Marquette Agricultural Show) for publication in this issue but it has failed to reach us, as yet".

The Queen's Mail moved slowly and seven weeks after the fair, the Free Press (December 7th, 1872) carried a glowing report of the event. There were four hundred entries and the fair had far surpassed expectations. Although it was the first year in the country for many of the settlers, the results, according to the Free Press, were such "as would reflect credit upon many an old county in Ontario". Continuing, the editor said.

"We congratulate the people of Marquette County on the success of their efforts and trust that their show may be the first in a long line of such. Our only regret, in conclusion, is that the hesitating and the sceptical of other Provinces were not there to see."

Noteworthy indeed is the fact that the two men who were the earliest breeders of pedigreed Shorthorns in all of Mid-Western Canada, divided the cattle honours at that first Pottage Fair. Walter Lynch won the Durham classes for aged bull, mature cow and heifer calf, while Kenneth McKenzie won with three-year old heifer, yearling heifer and bull call. In the herd class, Lynch was first and McKenzie, second.

The same two pioneers won most of the awards in horses McKenzie had the best in two-year old stallions, yearlings, span of work horses and "native cart horses with Indian blood", while Lynch won the brood mare class and the foal class. Donald Stewart took first prize for a pair of ewe lambs of Leicester breeding and John McLean had the winning fat wether.

It would seem that the president of the Agricultural Society whether through loyalty to the fair or ambition to win prizes, set out to make an entry in nearly every class in the show.

Hugh Grant had a better Firkin of Butter and Clinton Giddings beat the president in Home Made Cheese, but in vegetables and grains, the McKenzie had a long list of triumphs that would do credit to an established Experimental Farm. Having four different varieties of potatoes from his own ground, would prove that he was making an experimental farm search for suitable kinds.

McKenzie won first prize for each of the following grains and vegetables: fall wheat, "Glasgow or Fife" wheat, rye, large peas, small peas, Indian corn, hops, Early Rose potatoes, Shamrock potatoes, Kidney potatoes, "A.O.V." potatoes, Swede turnips, mangolds, sugar beets, field carrots, table carrots, red onions, yellow onions, white onions, "A.O.V." onions, watermelons, cucumbers and cauliflower. Just four years before, Kenneth McKenzie's new breaking at Rat Creek was the most westerly cultivation on the prairie side of the Rocky Mountains. The fact that he was able to grow watermelons must have shocked the skeptical. have shocked the skeptical.

have shocked the skeptical.

Here were the fruits of soil about which Sir George Simpson had testified pessimistically, exactly fifteen years earlier. The question directed to him by the Special Committee of the British House of Commons, was: "Supposing it were erected into a Territory, do you suppose that the country could be self-supporting?" His answer was: "I think not". And when asked "why", his answer, a colossal misjudgement was, "... poverty of the soil". McKenzie who knew farming in Scotland and Ontario was out to prove the falseness of Sir George's opinion. He said it was the best soil in the world and his grains and melons and potatoes seemed to support the claim.

McKenzie left a few other classes for his neighbours to win. Murdoch McLeod won with Golden Drop wheat; William Kittson had the best barley, C. Curtis the best timothy seed, Francis Ogletree the best fanning mill and Hugh Grant was the victor with iron harrows. The secretary of the Society, C. Mair, showed the first prize buffalo robe while in home made mitts, Nova Scotian Hugh Grant and the president won a class each, the Grant with woolen mitts and the McKenzie with leather mitts.

mitts.

That first Portage la Prairie Fair, sometimes referred to as the "McKenzie Fair", was concluded most appropriately with

a dinner at the "Anderson House", for the judges and friends. The judges from Winnipeg included such well known individuals as Donald A. Smith, J. W. Taylor who was American Consul, and A. G. Bannatyne. President Kenneth Mc Kenzie said there would be no speeches. He had to take cattle home from the fair and had cows to milk after that.

One year later, the second annual fair was held by the Marquette Society. It was a much bigger thing. Entries numbered close to seven hundred. Kenneth McKenzie wearing his best Glengarry, and Walter Lynch sporting a new "Christie stiff" were again sharing the principal winnings in cattle and horses. John McLean won with his Berkshire boar and Donald Steward added to his reputation of leading sheepman. Not so well known were those who won in the classes for team of oxen and single cart ox.

Everybody milked a few cows and every farm wife considered herself a champion buttermaker. The butter exhibits that came forward on this occasion would have made a small fair by themselves. There were sixty entries and all farm-made. The main classes were "Firkin of butter, not less than fifty-six pounds" and "butter for table, not less than five pounds". There was no refrigeration and at the end of the fair the first prize product appeared as soft and shapeless and unattractive as the poorest.

No special prize was refused and a donor considered it his right to name a contest in which his prize would be given. At this fair were Specials for the "best raule", "best span of native carriage horses", "home made cloth", "blood beet Seed", "Manitoba made salt", "home-made vinegar", "home-made sugar", "gang plough", "wooden plough", "iron harrows", "wooden harrows", "fanning mill", "Red River cart", "Red River wagon", and "single harness".

The pioneers were obliged to make many of the articles that modern farmers, buy. But necessity was a good teacher and Portage Ta Prairie tables were furnished with flour, sugar and salt produced locally. The man who won the prize for Manitoba-made salt was Jaquish Monkman, son of a Red River pioneer. Source of his product was a spring beside the White Mud River and enough was sold to salt the cows, flavor the porridge and cure the meat for miles around Portage la Prairie.

Classes important to the settlers appeared in the section for Domestic Manufacture" and were further evidence of pioneer resourcefulness. This section included classes for woolen socks, woolen mitts, deerskin moccasins, deerskin mitts, fancy knitting, fancy beadwork, rag mats, home made flour, saddles, canoes and straw hats.

The most ambitious Manitoba fair in its time was the Propincial Exhibition at Portage la Prairie in 1883. In petitioning the Board of Agriculture for the right to hold the Provincial Exhibition, the Portage la Prairie directors presented a strong case. They reported an expenditure of nine thousand dollars for the previous year and showed a slight balance on the operations. If that wasn't enough to impress the Provincial Board, the Portage people could relate some clever transactions in real estate. They had sold ten acres of land for twenty-four thousand dollars anad then bought twenty-one acres east of the station for five thousand five hundred dollars and spent twenty-three hundred dollars in fencing it. The new grounds had a half-mile track for horse racing and to strengthen the Society's propaganda it could quote from the first issue of the Nor'-West Farmer, (August 1882) which said that, "Portage is Prairie can boast of as many fast horses as any town of its size in Canada".

The Society had a bank balance of sixteen thousand dollars and planned to spend eight thousand dollars on buildings. It was a financial position that would inspire a loan inspector but members of the Provincial Board of Agriculture were more difficult to inspire and so, the petitioners were ready with what they thought was a "trump card". The Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie voted a grant of one thousand dollars, the Town council another thousand and the citizens pledged two thousand.

The Board of Agriculture had applications from several towns wanting the Provincial Exhibition and the Provincial grant to help make it big. By process of elimination the field was narrowed to two, Brandon and Portage la Prairie. On a vote, the two contenders had the same number of ballots and the chairman of the Board cast a deciding vote in favor of Portage la Prairie.

Portage, with a population of three thousand five hundred,

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went wild with joy. As the dates October 1-6, 1883, drew near the entire town was given a face-lifting. Yards were raked new planks were laid for sidewalks and new buildings were erected on the grounds. Hotels promised half rates instead of double rates for the period of the fair and the farm paper carried helpful pointers about judging cattle, for the benefit of exhibitors, judges and spectators at the Provincial Exhibition

The prize list revealed an offer of eight thousand dollars in the various competitions and its advertising told that the Queen's Hotel had fifty beds and the best wines and liquors in town. The Stickney House was not to be outdone and claimed not only the best brands of liquors and cigars but the "best stable accomodation in the city". And on the back page, the C.P.R. advertised farm lands and town lots at various points assured of becoming mighty centres of industry, "Carberry, Marquette, Rosser, McGregor, Sidney, Sewall, Gretna, Chater and Melbourne".

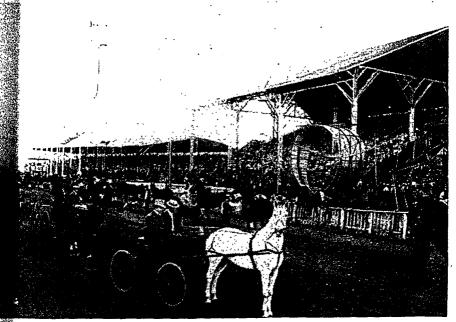
Advertising might be based upon wishful thinking, but the fair itself brought out the best display of the fruits of agriculture and livestock seen together. Most coveted prize at the fair was one hundred dollars offered by the Land Department of the Hudson's Bay Company for the best twenty-five bushels of Red Fife wheat grown in Manitoba. Ten entries were forward and James R. Hartney of Souris was the winner. The only other contest with one hundred dollars for first prize was open to brass bands playing at the fair but there is no record of whose entry won it.

Ayrshire cattle were prominent and considerable novelty surrounded a few Herefords, representing a comparatively new breed in the West. Walter Lynch and Kenneth McKenzie who had competed at every fair staged at Portage la Prairie were out again with their purebred "Durhams", Lynch with nineteen head and McKenzie with seven.

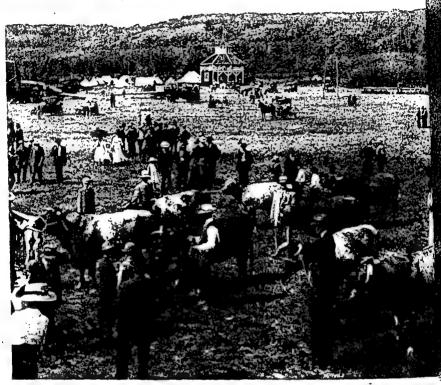
Machinery proved of special interest. If there were any threshing machines on the grounds, they were without wind-stackers and self-feeders, but other lines told of changes. A Brantford Cord Binder stood beside the Brantford Light Reaper, (the first self binder was brought to the district in 1878), and word went around that Major Bell of the Qu'Appelle Farming Company in the Territories, had placed an order in



Prize Winning Cattle at Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition, 1899.



The President Leads the Parade at Winnipeg, 1902.



A View at Minnedosa Fair, about 1912.



Parade of Livestock at an Early Manitoba Fair.

pril for twenty-five American Deering twine binders. And sitors saw Wagner's Combination, a double-furrow stubble ough. They also saw stylish buggies of Manitoba manufacte and they saw the newest Chatham wagons.

One of the main purposes of the Exhibition was to encourage dustry and in the section for Manufacturers, there were fortye distinct classes for articles "Manufactured in Manitoba the North-West Territories", phaetons, buggies, platform agons, buckboards, bob-sleighs, pitchforks, sulky horse rakes, ot cutters, ox-harrows, straw cutters, breaking ploughs, straw rks, ox yokes, fanning mills, reapers, mowers, dairy utensils, id canoes. The art of working leather of which there was bundance in the buffalo country, was highly developed in arly Manitoba and at this fair there were classes for boots and shoes, farm harness, saddles, horse collars, moccasins, itts and buffalo robes.

Portage la Prairie fulfilled all expectations and the Provincial xhibition was proclaimed a great success. Two years later the Society started something else, a Ploughing Match. Ploughien who had learned the art in England, Scotland, Ontario, lova Scotia and elsewhere, met to determine local winners. It had more of an International Match about it than folk ealized. And the same Match had other significance that bould not be realized. It was the beginning of the Portage a Prairie Ploughing Match which sixty-five years later was the biggest annual event of its kind in all Western Canada.

The Portage la Prairie Fair slumped in the '90s. One writer stated that "Portage can no longer claim a place among the important fairs of Manitoba". Livestock entries fell away and the community was castigated for what was termed an apathy forn of wheat. But the Farmer's Advocate, after shaking its editorial finger, prophesied that,

"the time is near when even on these celebrated wheat plains, stock will be crowned king instead of wheat and the stables of the show grounds will require to be double their present capacity".

The slump was brief. In 1894, the Society took a new name, and a new home. The new name was Portage and Lakeside Agricultural Society and the new home was the site on the Island" in the Assiniboine River, a beautiful location that

seemed created for either a park or a Fair Grounds. To put chase the Island Grounds, the Directors of the Society has joined with the local Turf Club.

Any worrysome slump in livestock entries was checked to porarily in 1895 as a train load of cattle and horses enrouted the Territorial Exhibition at Regina, stopped off to fill to stables, eat all the local hay and swell the classes.

In the first decade of the new century, Portage la Praine Fair regained its early vigour and former reputation. Agriculture was the central feature, but new and novel attraction greeted those who came to the fair. Auto races of five atten miles made dust and noise and excitement in 1909. For a monster pageant in that year, Indians and near Indians foughthe Battle of Batoche all over again in front of the grandstand

In the livestock ring, other battles continued in deadly earnest, year after year. To local horsemen, there could be not higher honour than winning the Sweepstakes Cup and find dollars in cash offered by the Canadian Northern Railway for the best draft stallion, "any breed". In 1911, that inter-breed contest, with all the honour of breed fraternities at stake, brought together the best Clydesdales, Shires, Percherons and Belgians Up to that time there had been no class for Belgians but two big ones were brought forward on this occasion, anyway. Interest was so great that the exhibit hall and the side-show appeared to be uninhabited. Everybody was at the horse ring. When the decision was made it proved to be another Scottish triumph, with John Graham's Clydesdale, Mascarille, receiving the supreme championship and the acknowledged right to stand at the highest service fees for the ensuing year.

When Winnipeg ceased to operate an Exhibition, Portage la Prairie could claim to have the second biggest fair in Manitoba.

In 1947 with Pioneer Joseph Trimble as President and native son Keith Stewart as Secretary, Portage la Prairie celebrated its 75th anniversary. Its record of leadership was long and imposing. It was one of the leading class "B" Fairs in the West and had not forgotten that the first purpose of a fair is to foster improvement in agriculture.



### CHAPTER IV

### OTHERS FOLLOWED

"To say that public exhibitions of live stock are a pleasure and a benefit to the public at large is merely to repeat a truism which all the world knows. They have an elevating and ennobling effect on a large portion of the community."

Alex Galbraith, Farmer's Advocate, July 3, 1907.

Things developed rapidly after November 19th, 1869, when the Hudson's Bay Company relinquished territorial claim to Rupert's Land. Manitoba became a province in the next year and on February 21st, 1872, the Agricultural Society Act was passed, its purpose being defined as,

"To encourage agriculture by importing or procuring all new and improved kinds of grain, seeds and animals. To award prizes for introduction of breeding animals; for production of grain and vegetables and for excellence in agricultural products or work generally, to advance agriculture."

Provision was made for the organization of a Provincial Agricultural Society and County Agricultural Societies. Manitoba had four counties and according to plan, the presidents of the County Societies would become vice-presidents of the Provincial Agricultural Society. County Societies could qualify for government grants up to a maximum of \$250 and in 1873, according to N. C. MacKay,\* Marquette East, Provencher and Selkirk qualified.

The organization of Agricultaral Societies was being en-

<sup>\*</sup>N. C. MacKay in Report to Manitoba Agricultural Societies, 1926, stated, "the county societies, namely Marquette East, Provencher and Selkirk received grants of \$250, \$250, and \$201, respectively (in 1873), while in 1874, Selkirk is not mentioned but Lisgar is added to Marquette East and Provencher, The same applies to 1875. . . . In 1878, Westborne and Gladstone received \$132, and Portage — High Bluff received \$250."

couraged. In many districts, a church reprensented the first community effort of a self-reliant people; a school was second and then an Agricultural Society. But until 1880, Portage la Prairie was the only place in Manitoba holding an annual fair. Then things changed and fairs became numerous.

There was one fair in the Territories in 1880 and among the

There was one fair in the Territories in 1880 and among the several in Manitoba that year was a September show at Winnipeg under the auspices of the Provincial Agricultural Society. The South Dufferin Agricultural Society, later the Morden Agricultural Society, held its first show at Mountain City about the same time. This was a successful undertaking and it was said to have reassured many of the homesteaders who entertained doubts about remaining in the country

entertained doubts about remaining in the country.

In the same year, fairs were held at Rapid City, St. Norbert, Cartwright and Gladstone. One was staged by the Morris Agricultural Society at West Lynne and a fair at Clearwater represented an important beginning for the Mountain Agricultural Society. The latter paid out the sum of \$130 in prize money and among the few other items of expenditure appearing in the accounts were 80 cents for cheese and 40 cents for crackers, presumably the noon meal for the judges and management on show-day.

and management on show-day.

But it was a full scale effort, with livestock, grains, house hold articles and vegetables. It was the first public utterance of a new community. John G. Turiff, later Senator, won with swede turnips; Joseph Wallace won with yoke of oxen and Richard Preston demonstrated the best claim to being a mixed farmer by winning with poultry, a ram, a general purpose stallion, vegetables and a home-made straw hat.

Carman, with a long and proud record in the conduct of agricultural fairs, traces to the organization of the North Dufferin Agricultural Society on November 20th, 1880. But there was a fair at Carman that year, so it may be presumed that the vigorous pioneers in that district held a fair first and organized later. Things moved rapidly in the Carman organization and for its third fair in 1882, the prize list was increased to \$1000, considered a sensational offer at that time.

Rockwood Agricultural Society held its first fair at Stonewall in 1881 (having applied for its charter on June 19, 1880 and granted the fourth in the Province) and Pilot Mound and Society's first show was at Clearwater in the previous year, its 1881 event was the first fair at Crystal City where Thomas Greenway, later Premier Greenway, was homesteading. After Hew years, Mr. Greenway donated 10 acres for a permanent rair grounds at the latter point. It is worth nothing that Morris Agricultural Society, then a year old, held its first annual meeting in January and made proposals about tree planting and weed control.

In 1882 Manitoba had 19 local Agricultural Societies and 17 of them held fairs. Among the starters that year were Brandon, Beautiful Plains Agricultural Society at Neepawa, Killarney, Minnedosa, Boissevain, Springfield Society at Dugald, Russell, Holland, Manitou and Carberry. In the next year there were 24 Agricultural Societies and all had fairs. Portage Ta Prairie with the three-day Provincial Exhibition that year, attracted most attention, but otherwise, the Rockwood Agricultural Society holding its third annual event at Stonewall and

the Springfield Society at Dugald, had the best fairs.

In addition to the livestock, grains, vegetables and flowers at Stonewall, there were foot races, a Baby Show and a Ploughing Match. It was the first time that a ploughing match had been conducted in conjunction with a prairie fair and the society displayed advanced and commendable interest in junior work by having one section of the Ploughing Match for boys. It appears that the Agricultural Society at Emerson was the first organization in the West to provide Standing Crop Competitions. Those were started in 1884, while the Society at

Pilot Mound was studying the feasibility of importing superior bulls from England and Scotland. They were societies with advanced ideas about service.

Winnipeg might have had the Provincial Exhibition for a term of years, about this time, but there was too much caution and too little confidence and it was awarded to St. Boniface where the distinction rested in 1885 and 1886. St. Boniface furnished 25 acres and guaranteed \$10,000 for improvements. For its part, the Provincial Board of Agriculture spent \$28,000 on buildings and hopes were high that the city on the east side of the Red River would become the permanent home of Manitoba's principal exhibition.

Although the hope of permanency was not realized, the Provincial shows at St. Boniface were important in many ways. A number of new breeds of livestock appeared at the first Provincial Exhibition in that city, where prizes totalling \$10,000 were being offered. Thus there were new opportunities to consider breed choices for the farming country. The stolid Walter Lynch from Westbourne won the highest honours in Shorthoms Hon. Donald A. Smith of Silver Heights took 12 head of West Highland cattle from his grazing land on the west of Winnipeg where they added a touch of long-horned and shaggy romano to the countryside. And the same owner exhibited a few head of Herefords.

Many visitors to that fair saw Hereford cattle for the first time and all who attended saw the first Holstein-Friesian cattle ever exhibited at a Western Canadian fair. The little group of Holsteins consisted of a bull and female imported to Winnipeg by Archibald Wright, in 1881, and their offspring. The original two, called Selkirk and Nancy Jane, were the first purebred Holsteins in Western Canada and perhaps in all of Canada.

Products of Manitoba origin were most conspicuous at St Boniface in that notable year. Here was new and surprising evidence of what the province could produce. Sceptics had to be convinced that the watermelons and musk melons on display were not shipped in from the East or South. The lack of refrigeration did not prevent a hundred parcels of butter, mostly farm made, from coming forward. Perres and Hebert of St. Francois Xavier took second prize with an exhibit that seemed to hold special interest because it was the product of cream from "the first Laval separator ever shown in Manitoba". The Nor'-West Farmer (Nov. 1885) added a caustic opinion that the butter was better than that which won first prize.

In the North West Territories, "An Ordinance to Incorporate Agricultural Societies" was passed by the Territorial Council in session at Regina on November 16th, 1886. The act followed the Manitoba pattern and its objects were to encourage agricultural improvement:

"(a) By importing or otherwise procuring seeds, plants and animals of new and valuable kinds.

"(b) By awarding prizes for excellence in the raising or introduction of stock, the invention or improvement of agricultural implements or machines, the production of grain and all kinds of vegetables, plants, flowers and fruits, home manufactures and works of art, and generally for excellence in any agricultural production or operation.

"(c) By offering prizes for essays on questions of scientific enquiry relating to Agriculture, and the best systems of protection against prairie

fires."

But there were fairs in the Territories before the Ordinance was passed. Edmonton was first with a fair in 1879 and at least five places held fairs for the first time in 1884. These were Regina, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Indian Head and Whitewood. Starting in spite of the Rebellion scare in 1885 were Broadview, Moosomin, Moose Mountain Agricultural Society at Carlyle, Qu'Appelle, Yorkton and Wolseley. Those that held their first fairs in 1886 included Calgary, Saskatoon, Kinistino, Carnduff, Grenfell and Fort Macleod. Both Qu'Appelle and Kinistino Societies undertook to bring bure bred bulls to their districts and Kinistino established a library for its members.

John R. Craig, in his book, "Ranching with Lords and Commons", tells of attending the Agricultural and Livestock Exhibition at Fort Macleod on October 15th and 16th, 1886. He supposed it to be the first in the North West Territories. In this he was quite wrong. It was the first fair in that area but obviously not the first in the Territories. However that may be, there is author Craig's judgment that the livestock exhibits were good and the vegetables and grains were excellent. Certainly the Indians, the cow-punchers, the ex-whiskey traders and such characters as Fred Kanouse and "Kamoose" Taylor, who would be in attendance, would be sufficient in themselves to make a colourful show. Macleod didn't hold another fair until 1890 but thereafter it was on an annual basis.

Most likely there were other local fairs at that time, about which nothing appears in the records. For example, there is only the most sketchy account of an early and unscheduled fair at famous Cannington Manor, south of Moosomin, where

scholarly homesteaders were trying to farm like Canadians but live like Englishmen. From stories told, one may picture the little local fair, well planned but disappointing in outcome. There were no buildings, barns or shelters on the improvised fair grounds, but the inevitable fence had been erected to keep the non-paying guests out and the prize livestock in. Furthermore, a fence provided something to which the animals could be tied.

It is well known that every fair must have music and because the English talent at Cannington ran to vocal and orchestral music, nothing appropriate for outdoors was available. But there was a lone Scotsman homesteading bravely on the outskirts of that Sassenach community and he had bagpipes. In return for a bottle of Hudson's Bay whiskey, he would furnish music for the fair. At 11 a.m., when all exhibits were in place and the noble English livestock were tied, one to each fence post, the Scot inflated his pipes and blew his way into the MacGregor Lament.

The Cannington livestock had heard coyotes howl; they had listened to the yelp of fox hounds and to pigs squealing for their dinners, but never had they heard anything quite like this, and with unison born of sudden terror, the frantic cattle and horses pulled up the fence posts and left by the shortest routes for their homestead homes. For all practical purposes, the fair was over. But from 1888, Cannington Manor held annual fairs, good fairs, especially in the racing department.

There were other unusual fairs. One was in 1898 when G. H. Wheatley, Indian Agent at Blackfoot Reserve, east of Calgary, hit upon the idea of the Indians holding a fair as a substitute for the annual Sun Dance. It was a radical proposal but an Indian Fair was held at Gleichen on September 24th and for the first time, Indians exhibited vegetables and crops and cattle.

The little town of Killarney in Manitoba staged a fair in 1903 and for a few years thereafter, the magnitude of the event was out of all proportion to the size of the town. It was a three day fair, with circus, a Sioux Indian encampment, special excursion trains from Winnipeg and a \$10,000 prize list. In relation to the size of the town, it was the biggest fair in the world but along in 1905 and 1906 it came in for strong



public criticism because of gambling and the sale of "strong lemonade." It had become big, too fast.

One of the unorthodox fairs was in Saskatchewan at a much Later date. The effect was to take advantage of the government's generosity in paying a grant equal to half of the prize money paid to the exhibitors. As a Class "C" Fair, Wakaw had been successful, offering about \$1450 in prizes and paying out about half the amount. With new management, came new ambitions. The little town was about to graduate to "big league" fairs.

The idea was to offer the biggest prizes in Saskatchewan and make money by doing it. The scheme was brilliant, though fantastic. The fair would offer enormous prizes, collect 33 1/3% of the prize money in entry fees, collect another 50% of the prize money as a grant from the Provincial Government and then make a division of the net amount of prize money owing to the exhibitor after entry fees were deducted and accept the return, on behalf of the Agricultural Society, of a certain percentage.

The scheme worked in 1926, and 1927 was a banner year according to John Curror who, as manager of the fair at Prince Albert, was in a good position to witness the epic. A total prize offer of \$11,838, with \$9,025 of it for livestock, had a colossal ring about it. It was little wonder that breeders over a large area were attracted, when they read that prizes in the cattle and horses classes were generally, \$45 for the first, \$40 for the second, \$35 for the third, \$30 for fourth and \$25 for fifth. In sheep and swipe the prizes were \$25, \$20, \$15

\$40 for the second, \$35 for the third, \$30 for fourth and \$25 for fifth. In sheep and swine, the prizes were \$25, \$20, \$15, \$10 and \$5. Such would have been considered good prizes at a National Exhibition and entries numbered 573 in livestock and 1936 in other departments.

But exhibitors were to discover a terrible discrepancy between gross prize money won and net prize money retained. It was told that the gross prizes, money earned by all exhibitors in 1927, totalled \$6,486. But fees, deductions and government grants, by the adopted formula should have returned to the treasury, some \$6,845.

One well known breeder who took two carloads of horses, cattle, sheep and pigs to that fair and won extensively was shocked when his total net return in prizes was \$300. The

same stock at Prince Albert fair with a more modest prize is won \$900 for him. Strangely enough the Society was able to follow the same scheme in 1928 and it almost worked in 1928 but the Provincial Government refused to pay the big grant and the fair went into eclipse.

In 1896, Manitoba had 50 Agricultural Societies, most of them holding annual fairs. It worked out to one society for every 500 farms. Premier Thomas Greenway was one of those who believed that the fairs had become too numerous. He expressed a wish for fewer and stronger fairs and suggested 20 for Manitoba.

But while some of the societies were doing little to justify existence, others were following aggressive programmes, and pointing continuously to better things for the farming community. Some imported bulls, some sponsored educational lectures; some conducted ploughing matches; some attempted to supplement the work of the Experimental Farms and other provided libraries for their members, all in addition to the fair conducted regularly.

There were many examples of what the fairs did for live-stock promotion and crop improvement, and a few early examples of their aid in fruit culture. Fruit growing in Manitoba soil seemed altogether fantastic until exhibition demonstrations were presented at the end of the last century. Manitoba grown fruit was the central attraction at the Stonewall Fair in 1896, when A. P. Stevenson and others displayed standard apples, plums and crabs. Next year (1897), Morden featured fruits at its fair and again they were mainly the exhibits from A. P. Stevenson's farm eight miles to the northwest, that created the biggest sensations. Here were Wealthy apples, Blushed Calville and others that looked and sounded awfully good to apple-hungry farming people.

It was the business of the fair, big fair or small, to press forward and to interest itself, not in livestock alone, but in cultural practices, conservation, fruits, homes and other essentials in the new western society. The fairs and exhibitions filled a big need, especially in those pioneer years.

#### CHAPTER V

## WINNIPEG HAD GOOD INTENTIONS

"The Winnipeg Industrial is an educational institution and the one object and aim of the Directors is to present the lessons of the Fair in the broadest and clearest light that the greatest benefits may be secured by the people who visit it, and by those who through ingenuity, skill and industry, have produced new or superior lines for introduction to the public . . . . Believing that it is necessary to amuse as well as instruct, to provide for the lighter side of man's nature as well as to the serious and business side, the Board has always furnished and will continue to do so, feature exhibits to attract attention."

Winnipeg Industrial Manifesto, 1905.

WINNIPEG'S EXHIBITION STARTED DANGEROUSLY, LIVED HANDsomely, and died prematurely. For a time it promised to be second only to Toronto Exhibition and citizens were ready to call Winnipeg the "Fairest" City of Canada. But when the end came, there was little disposition to revive the institution and the Winnipeg of later years stood as the only big city in the West that did not conduct an Annual Fair or Exhibition.

Indifferent as the West's oldest city has appeared to be to a modern exhibition, Winnipeg led the prairie parade and held the first fall fair between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains.

It was in 1871; the Province of Manitoba was one year old and the urban community of Fort Garry had a population of 500. Indians and half-breeds outnumbered the whites and males outnumbered the females. The streets were of Red River clay; water was delivered from house to house by cart;

transportation was by canoe, stagecoach, Red River cart and steamboat; and cows that grazed along Main Street fraternized annoyingly with passing oxen that had no time for nonsense.

But a new spirit of optimism pervaded the settlement about the forks of the Red and Assiniboine and citizens displayed a determination to organize. On the first of July they celebrated their first Dominion Day and did it with a 500-dollar programme of sports that would have done credit to a fair. Then were horse races, both trotting and running, foot races, jumps football, cricket and competitions like "climbing a greasy pole" "putting the stone" and "throwing the sledge hammer." It was a big event and coupled with the formation of the Manitob Agricultural Society on August 1st, it suggested bigger things

A fair would demonstrate what the soil was capable of yielding; it could reassure the settlers and its competitions would stimulate interest in better farming methods. All in all, it

seemed to be a good idea.

Charles Napier Bell, who came to Manitoba as a privale with the Red River Expedition under Colonel Wolseley in 1870, and served afterwards as President of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, was an ardent exponent of a fair. In the new organization, he was named Secretary and Manager and he did his part well enough. The fact of the ensuing fair being rated a failure did not in any way reflect upon Bell's part or ability.

The date of the first Winnipeg Fair was set for October 4th, 1871 and the secretary had 500 entries of vegetables, grains, homemade equipment and livestock. Quality was said to be high but a report that Fenian Raiders had crossed the boundary near Pembina and were marching in the direction of For

Garry, diverted all thought away from the fair.

Indian Treaty Number One had been signed with the Chippewas and Swampy Crees in August, but here was quite a different sort of threat to security. Citizens were filled with fear, and the crop products and farm animals being displayed at the fair were overshadowed and neglected. Happily the Fenian threat was averted and there was no bloodshed, but the fair suffered an inglorious end. When the Agricultural Committee of the Provincial Government met in 1872, it had before it a request for a grant of \$459.95 to cover a deficit from the fair

the previous year. But the committeemen were not in a

generous mood. They pointed out that a grant had been made previously and one was enough. The request was rejected.

It was 20 years before Winnipeg held another fair on its own behalf although the Provincial Agricultural Society held shows in the city in 1880 and 1881. St. Boniface, just across the Red River, was doing better and with the approval of the Manitoba Board of Agriculture, was able to conduct the recognized Provincial Exhibition for several years.

There was talk about a Winnipeg Fair in 1882. The Nor'-West Farmer, in its second issue, (Sept. 1882) pressed the proposal and urged that a request be sent to Ottawa for a grant of land for a fair grounds. But nothing came of it and, without a fair grounds, those who indulged in horse racing found no better place to compete than on Main Street where horse-drawn street cars were operating for the first time. When a race was about to begin, the horse-cars were halted and drivers and five-cent passengers seemed glad to become spectators.

that it would subscribe \$2000 to support the cause if given the Provincial Exhibition in 1884. The Board considered the offer to be totally inadequate and countered with a proposal that if Winnipeg contributed \$12,000 for buildings, the city might have the Provincial Exhibition for a fire-year period. But evidently Winnipeg didn't want the fair that much and there was no Provincial exhibition in this particular year.

The only Winnipeg events resembling a fair at that time were the first Manitoba Pet Stock Show on June 18, 1884, and the first Fruit and Flower Show, sponsored by the Forestry and Horticultural Society on September 3rd and 4th, of the same year. There was a suggestion from Ottawa that if Winnipeg could and would provide suitable facilities it could celebrate the completion of the C.P.R. by having the 1886 Dominion Exhibition and the Federal grant that went with it. But Winnipeg was still not ready.

Interested Winnipeggers were invited to a special meeting on February 18, 1890 to discuss an Annual Exhibition. Mayor Pearson was Chairman and from the assembled gathering came resolution, "That it is desirable to hold an annual agricultural and industrial exhibition in Winnipeg." A proposal that Winnipeg might arrange to use the exhibition buildings at & Boniface was rejected. Winnipeg might be slow to arouse, but now it was determined to be independent in the conduct of a fair. The Government, it was expected, would assist and the Canadian Pacific Railway promised reduced rates for passengers attending the proposed fair and free freight on exhibit

A bylaw to assist an exhibition was submitted to the rate payers in 1890 and was rejected, but early in the next year the same ratepayers voted in favour of contributing \$30,000 for that purpose. A fair grounds' site, consisting of 75 acres at the west end of Dufferin Avenue was bought from the Dominion Government and the erection of buildings began at once.

The first Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition was announced for September 28th to October 3rd, 1891. It was hoped that this would erase the unpleasant memory of the affair of 20 years before, and set a new and superior pattern for western fair and exhibitions. C. N. Bell, who had been secretary for the abortive effort of earlier years was again in that position and Alex MacDonald was president. The Provincial Government grant was \$7,500; a \$13,500 prize list was published and competition was "open to the world." Nobody could say that preparations were not worthy of the Gateway City.

The Free Press (of Sept. 28, 1891) carried the following

advertisement:

# COME TO THE WINNIPEG INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION SEPT. 28 TO OCT. 3

### MANITOBA'S GREAT FAIR

The very large number of Entries already made, which are more than double the most sanguine estimates of the Directors, insures the Success of the Great Exposition in the Agricultural, Live Stock, Mineral, Manufacturing, Horticultural, Dairy and other resources of Manitoba and the North-West.

THE SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS Increase in number day by day, and promise to pro-

vide for the ENTIRE EXHIBITION Endless Entertainment, Instruction and Amusement.

The Little World, from Australia — the greatest mechanical wonder of the age.

A Three Days' Programme of Speeding Horses in the Ring.

Full Entries in all the contests.

Pony and Dog Races for the Little Ones.

School Drill Competition Lacrosse & Baseball Matches

A Great Dog Bench Show, covering the Best and Most Valuable Dogs in the Country.

Grand Band Competition. Firemen's Hose-Reel Races Military Sports. Children's Races and Athletic Contests Great Baby Show, for which a large number of entries are already made. Printers' Type-setting Contest.

A Magnificent Display of Fine Arts.

The Grounds lighted with Electricity. Telegraph, Telephone, Phonograph and Express Offices in the Building.

A Full Programme of Fireworks Wednesday, Thursday and Friday Evgs.

### UNPRECEDENTLY LOW RAILWAY RATES FROM ALL POINTS

Alexander MacDonald, President.
C. N. Bell, Secretary-Treasurer.

Everything seemed to be in Winnipeg's favour this time. Rains had been general and Manitoba had a good crop. On the first morning of the show, 65 rigs and 1650 people passed through the gate and by the end of the day, gatekeepers counted 7000 admissions, to say nothing of "an estimated 1000 who went over the fence." (At Brandon, we boys found it easier to go under).

At the Official Opening on September 30th, Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Schultz, said Winnipeg needed a fair; Premier Thomas Greenway congratulated the province; Mayor Alfred Pearson promised support and Exhibition President, Alexander MacDonald, announced that 4000 exhibits were

assembled from as far west as British Columbia and as a east as Ontario.

Horse entries numbered 411; cattle entries 185; sheep & pigs 47 and poultry 203. In cattle there were classes for Du hams, Polled Angus, Galloways, Herefords, Holsteins, Jersey and Guernšeys, Ayrshires and West Highlands. In pigs, the three breed divisions were "Berkshires", "Yorkshire - Cheste White or Other Large Breed" and "Essex, Suffolks of As Other Small Breed." And in other departments, one could st contests for grains, vegetables, plants, honey, meats, leather goods, ladies' work, fine arts, natural history, school wor manufactures, dogs and babies. There was a class for almost any product that a Manitoban felt an urge to display. And entertainment was provided to meet every taste; racing, lacross and b'aseball every afternoon, and band competitions, platform attractions and fireworks each night. As a new exhibition for ture, M. Conways was permitted to organize an auction sale of livestock. The planning was good and Winnipeg was encour aged.

Next year, Winnipeg offered \$15,000 and adopted summe dates (July 25-29) instead of October. A master mind directed that Winnipeg's new electric street cars would operate for the first time on the second day of the fair. The Mayor, Councillors and Officers of the Board of Trade displayed their fearlessness by being first to ride the electric wonders, as they made their way to the Exhibition. And it is recorded that the heroic city athers completed the journey without so much as being electrocuted.

In 1893, they dropped West Highland cattle from the prize list and added Devons; neither breed is encountered in the country now. The show continued to enjoy financial success but critics were beginning to accuse the Board of losing sight of the educational purposes of the exhibition. The Farmer's Advocate (Aug. 20, 1893) admitted a good display of agricultural and industrial products but believed the directors were spending too much money on "montebanks and high kicking women." Nor did the editor think much of the "two-headed plaster giants, double-headed babies and cane racks".

Regina, with its Territorial Exhibition, robbed Winnipeg of some of its glory in 1895 and the Winnipeg directors learned



Directors of Brandon Fair, 1894

Front row, left to right, John McKellar, William Anderson, not known, A. C. McPhail, James Gibson, Robt. Matheson, Col. Clark, Alex. Gambley

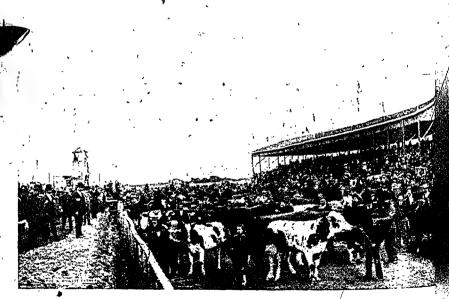
Back fow, left to right, Thomas Jasper, not known, Dave Sherrif, not known, Wm. McKelvie, H. L. Patmore, R. E. A. Leach, Roderick McKenzie, W. H. Warner, Johnstein, Mr. Horner, Peter Payne, T. B. Wallace, Henry Nichol, Wm. Chalmers.



A. B. Potter's Holsteins at Brandon, 1898.



Aged Clydesdale Stallions at Brandon in 1906.



Livestock Parade at Brandon in 1898.

hat they must be aggressive and improve their plant if leaderhip was to be maintained. The grants of \$5000 from the city and \$3,500 from the province were not sufficient to support building programme. The Exhibition Association owned no roperty, simply held the exhibition grounds in trust for the ty and could not borrow money. The city was asked for a an of \$30,000, to be repaid in 30 years. A bylaw to authorize le loan was submitted to the taxpayers on April 23rd, 1896 and carried.

New barns, an enlarged grandstand and other improvements ere undertaken at once and were ready for the summer fair. In the some classes quite new to the West were introduced. They ere the "Get of Sire" and "Progeny of Dam" classes in cattle and horses, and breeders welcomed the opportunity of studying the prepotency as well as the individuality of the pedigreed tock. It was a step in the right direction. Directors, too, were appy with an attendance of 40,000 and a tidy profit. Hon. I homas Greenway said he considered it something that was well worthy of the support of the people. Said Greenway, "it impresses me each successive year, with the fact that the province is making steady progress."

Livestock sensation of the 1897 fair was John Barron's Shorthorn bull, Topsman, winner of championship in his breed and "Special" for "the bull best calculated to get export steers." Lesser lights in the livestock section were William Sharman's dereford bull champion, Valentine; John Ewen's Clydesdale tallion, Erskine Lad, and Roderick McKenzie's Champion dolstein bull, Emperor of Canada. The butter display of that ear was the biggest and best the country had seen and mphasis was on farm-made butter. In the class for 20-pound rocks of butter made by a farmer's daughter, there were 51 intries and Flora Munroe was champion Dairy Maid.

Things were going well again, and after the exhibition, lanager Heubach's salary was increased from \$1500 to \$2000 year.

At the beginning of the century, Winnipeg advertised Western Canada's Great 20th Century Fair." President W. Thompson (annual meeting, Feb. 15, 1902) called it

"a school to the agriculturist, a study to the mechanic

and artisan, a magnificent advertising medium to the whole Canadian Northwest and a great source of pleasure and profit to everybody.

The Governor-General of Canada was an exhibition visitor in that year of 1900 and \$16,000 was the amount distributed in prizes.

Manitoba was intensely dairy conscious at that period While an Agricultural College was being considered, some people were urging that it take the form of a Dairy School A milking competition was one of the innovations in the cattle barns that year, but as a test of a cow's production for two days only, it was not very valuable. In the next year, (1901) a new Buttermaking Competition was instituted. Here we something strangely different from a modern buttermaking contest. Each contestant was given 40 pounds of ripensed cream and was required to conduct all churning operations according to his or her own techniques, from there on, doing so in full view of the public. Speed in making the butter and the quality of the finished product were the factors determining the winners.

In the machinery section, many new things were appearing Most handsome was the mighty steam tractor, "Cock o'the North", and most widely advertised was the Waterous Tractor with its smoke funnel planted awkwardly on the rear end Some of the grain separators had straw blowers but the majoring were equipped with straw carrier only.

For 10 years the C.P.R. had been carrying exhibits to and from the Winnipeg Industrial, freight-free. In 1901, the company announced that the practice could not be continued, but agreed to furnish return fare transportation for 40% of the regular one-way freight charge. Then, Winnipeg Industrial came forward with the magnanimous proposal that it would pay the 40% and thus exhibitors could continue to enjoy free freight on livestock and other entries.

Winnipeg played host to the Dominion Exhibition in 1904 and the Board announced that it was offering \$100,000 for prizes and attractions. Attendance went to 210,000. It was an achievement in which Winnipeg had justifiable pride but there was one tragedy that might have been more serious.

Wrestler" performed in a section of the cattle ring, about 200 people climbed to the roof of No. 3 cattle stable to watch the show, without the annoying necessity of having to pay an admission. When a constable went up the ladder to remove the parsimonious spectators, they crowded to one end to avoid thim and the roof collapsed, with nearly 100 of them being furled to earth, some falling among Hon. Clifford Austin's trantic Aberdeen Angus cattle and some on top of A. B. Potter's Holsteins. A spectator said that above the moans of the injured came the shrill voice of one of the victims, trapped between a pair of bulls. He was calling to find out who was winning the wrestling match. Thirty-seven people were injured, however, many of them with fractures, and they were rushed to hospital. But recovery was generally satisfactory.

Auto racing was one of the features of 1905, but holding no less interest was a parade of all the automobiles in Winnipeg. The very first car on a Winnipeg street had made its appearance just four years earlier and it was in the parade. Looking like a deformed buggy and sounding like a machine shop, this one was a Knox and had been brought in by a professor, of all things, Professor E. B. Kenrick of St. John's College. How a professor would have enough money to buy a car in those times has never been explained. Anyway the new gasoline-driven vehicles were novelties to the exhibition visitors from tural Manitoba for several years.

There were some other features about the fair of 1905 that were not so attractive. The Industrial's manager had resigned and it was the decision of the Board of Directors to operate without a manager. Each director was to be responsible for the management of his own department. It was a foolish policy and things got out of hand. The Farmer's Advocate (Aug. 16, 1905) had the strongest disapproval:

"As a collection of lewdness and discord, filth and crookedness, it deserves the palm; and it may have been only coincidence that for some time the sewers at the grounds went on strike . . . . The odor of the skunk will be as perfume to the nostrils of all decent people."

The directors were now wiser men and they set out to find a manager. Dr. A. W. Bell, with experience at the Canadian National Exhibition, where he began as a clerk, 18 year earlier, came to Winnipeg in 1906 to take over management He was a man of ideas though perhaps a better showman than business manager and there was more trouble ahead.

Competition in the horse classes was at its peak about 1908 when Winnipeg introduced its famous Motor Competition. Horsemen said it was ill advised and rebel, that it would convey extravagant ideas about power. Rebel or not, it pointed to a new and vital trend in agriculture and nothing at Winnipeg's Industrial Exhibition in that year attracted more interest than the Motor Competition.

It was open to the lighter types of tractors, but at that they weren't so light because they weighed up to 14,000 pounds Manufacturers were invited to enter their new models and entries were to perform before the judges, just like so many horses, and the best ones to win.

The competition was open to the world. Visitors came from afar to see the spectacle. Representatives from the United States Department of Agriculture were there to study the performance.

Judges were Wm. Cross of the C.P.R. and A. R. Greig afterwards Professor Greig of Saskatchewan. Something resembling a score card was prepared to guide them in determining suitability for farm work. Consideration would be given to weight of tractor, horse power, fuel and water consumption distance travelled without replenishing, turning ability, protection of working parts from dust and mud, accessibility of parts, speeds, ease of manipulation, clearance of working parts from the ground, steadiness and price, F.O.B. Winnipeg.

Nine makes were entered and the contestants took to the field laid out on the Exhibition Ground, to plough, disc, had loaded wagons and perform belt work. It wasn't a faultless demonstration by any means. Two tractors broke down but returned to the contest after repairs; a third broke down and could not return. When rain fell the third day, the mechanical Light-Heavyweights floundered in the Winnipeg gumbo, like elephants in a swamp.

But it was a landmark in the evolution of the highly efficient

modern tractor and when the judges had made their decisions, the first prize and gold medal was awarded to the Kinneard-Haines entry, a 30 horsepower, four-cylinder tractor, weighing 13,530 pounds, and capable of pulling six ploughs. Second prize and silver medal went to International Harvester Company with a 15 horsepower, two-cylinder tractor of 9,920 pounds and third to the Marshall with 30 horsepower and two cylinders.

Thereafter, the Motor Competition was an annual event and attracted international attention. Not being given to modesty, the Winnipeg people called it the "Farm Motor Competition of the World." By 1913, with 25 engines competing, only two were steam, a J. I. Case and a Sawyer Massey. The steam engine was in decline but not giving up without a struggle.

Engine was in decline but not giving up without a struggle.

Changes in styles were not restricted to engines as the clothing and women's hats to be seen on the grounds would show.

And Winnipeg people can suppress all levity when witnessing one of the evening dress parades that goes with the Horse Show at the Royal Winter Fair in the City of Toronto, because the correct dress for men attending the Winnipeg Show, according to an item appearing in the prize list of 1909, was:

"Morning—Fancy sac suit or English walking suit. Afternoon—Frock coat and vest, grey stripe trousers. Evening—Full dress suit with black or white vest."

It is reasonably certain that not all who attended the Winnipeg Industrial were correctly dressed according to the above.

Winnipeg people witnessed the first heavier-than-air flying machine at the Industrial in 1910, when Eugene Ely made flights daily. Aviation became an annual attraction. The arrangements about aeroplane flights for the next year were made directly with the Wright Brothers and in 1912, Winnipeg had one monoplane and one biplane bidding for attention. A plane continued to be a novelty for several years. Beachey, "the Bird Man", was the aviator attraction in 1914 and that he was a thrilling attraction, nobody reading the Farmer's Advocate (of July 22, 1914) could doubt.

"Every afternoon and evening, thousands stand in breathless concentration as the great machine, guided and controlled by the power of man, wings its way to dizzy heights until it is no more than a great bird flying in the sky. Then the driver, with the sky as his playground, coasts down Olympian hills and plays hide and seek with the clouds and stars, turning and twisting and somersaulting. The game over, Beachey slides back to earth, and the bird he has ridden becomes again a huge monster."

It seemed that almost every exhibition had the experience of losing a grandstand at some time in those years before fireproof construction. The Winnipeg stand burned to the ground, one week before the opening date of the Exhibition in 1911. But there was vigor in Winnipeg and the management announced that the show would go on and that a new grandstand would be built in the intervening seven days. And on opening day, a new grandstand stood waiting for business.

The event of 1912 was a "special." It marked the 100th anniversary of the arrival of settlers at Red River and was called "Lord Selkirk's Centennial." The livestock exhibits of that year were said to be the best in the history of the West.

It was becoming known that all was not well within the organization. The Industrial was losing money, \$31,792 in 1908; \$1,486 in 1909; \$12,360 in 1910 and \$8,793 in 1912. It was reported that the Industrial Exhibition had cost the City about \$253,000 for capital improvements and about \$142,000 for maintenance. The debt was becoming bigger year by year in spite of an annual grant from the city of \$7,500. The bank debt in 1912 stood at \$67,000 and the Board had no assets, except the lease from the City. It was not a nice position.

A special committee reporting on the day after Christmas, 1912, was most un-Christmas-like in its criticism of the management. Too often settlements were made by cash instead of cheque, according to the report; vouchers were not always available and minutes and records were faulty.

Winnipeg Exhibition's position was shaky. But the Board accepted certain proposals about administrative changes and went forward with hope. Plans for a new site to cost \$475,000 and buildings to cost half a million dollars were being studied.

The show of 1913 opened in a blaze of glory. The sixth Annual Motor Contest brought out 20 tractors and new



features included the Percheron Horse Futurity and a novel Grain Cleaner Competition. As it was reasoned, every farmer should know a good fanning mill when he sees it and the Grain Cleaner Contest was intended to benefit both manufacturers and farmers. It was the first such competition in the world, so they said. The best judges in the field of agricultural entire were secured and a score card was drawn up to allow 175 points for efficiency in separation of seeds, 175 for capacity and 150 for construction. The test machines had to clean wheat, oats, barley, flax and timothy as supplied by the Exhibition. Results were studied carefully. One mill kicked 24% of the grain over the end and left 18 weed seeds per pound in the clean grain; another had only 5% of screenings but left 111 weed seeds in each pound of so-called clean grain. Makers and farmers learned a lot.

James Durno came from Scotland to judge the Shorthorns that year and Robert Caswell's celebrated bull, Gainford Marquis, was awarded the grand championship, squaring an old account by defeating Sultan's Stamp, an American bull placed over the Caswell bull at Chicago in the previous season. The farm journals said it was one of the best Agricultural and Industrial Shows on the continent and that Manager Bell deserved congratulations for the energy and originality that went into it.

But the new machinery and the big entry of livestock couldn't guarantee good weather. As the rain continued and the Red River mud became deeper and more gummy, financial difficulties were precipitated. There was a whispering campaign that said "the Exhibition is on its last legs." The "dog" had been given a bad tag and couldn't shake it off.

The Exhibition organization carried on, hoping that the City of Winnipeg would come to its financial rescue. It tried to appear as an association that had no troubles. The Exhibition of 1914 had all the outward appearance of a prosperous enterprise. Attendance was over 60,000 a day. Machinery row was crowded and the barns were full.

Gainford Marquis was there again to win the Shorthorn bull championship, this time for a new owner, H. L. Emmert. The young fellow, who led the bull into the ring and put on a mature display of showmanship was Charlie Yule who was

destined to guide the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede to new heights of glory. At the ringside was his father, James Yule, who had left a hospital bed to see the judging of his belowed Shorthorns. It was the elder Yule's last fair; he died in November and the West lost one of its ablest stockmen.

To add to the interest of that Shorthorn bull class, as viewed from a later period, the great Browndale, also owned H. I. Emmert was in third place, with a Carpenter & Ross bull from Ohio, standing between two of the greatest sires in Canadian Shorthorn history. Never before or since did two such outstanding breeding bulls appear together in a Canadian showning. In the Aberdeen Angus ring, J. D. McGregor of Brandom showed another breed worthy, Evreaux of Harviestoun, to win grand championship.

It was a successful Exhibition, but it was the last that Winnipeg was to have for some time. Opposition to the Exhibition was gaining strength and there was sharp difference of opinion between those who favored the Dufferin Avenue Site and those supporting the Kildonan Grounds. The Farmer's Advocate (Aug. 27, 1913) expressed the view that

"members of the City Council are the exhibition's worst enemies . . . Winnipeg City fathers and the citizens as a whole must get behind this exhibition. The several thousands of dollars of debt must be wiped off and the new grounds must be put into shape without further delay or quibbling. If the Council never voted money for less worthy purposes they need have no regrets. In what way could cash be spent to better advantage than in making Winnipeg's annual exhibition as good as Canada's best?"

But the hour was late and before the next season had arrived the directors announced that they felt unable to assume the mounting financial load without direct aid from the city. Winnipeg ratepayers rejected the overture for more help and Winnipeg's Industrial Exhibition passed into history. The Farmer's Advocate (Feb. 3, 1915) added this comment:

"It is regrettable that the shortsighted policy of abandonment by the city as a means of entrenchment should be undertaken, not only because it



affects the live stock industry, but because the city loses one of the strongest links connecting it with agriculture, which directly or indirectly is its sole support."

Winnipeg staged a few Horse Shows, a few Pet Shows and some horticultural Shows and an occasional rodeo. It even tried to revive an Exhibition during the middle '30s. Continuity was not a characteristic, however, although suburban neighbours like St. Vital and Selkirk held annual fairs for a long time. Winnipeg almost had a Rodeo in 1905 but somebody stole the cattle, the horses and the saddles. Successful Rodeos were held in 1912 and 1913 and in the latter year, prizes were offered amounting to \$20,000. Five hundred dollars was the first prize for Steer Bulldogging. Guy Weadick was there with his "educated rope" to manage the show and A. P. Day of Medicine Hat was Arena Director. Weadick's announcement to the cowboys, was:

"The money is here, come and get it. The best man wins and takes the money, irrespective of where he comes from or what his colour or nationality may be."

Among the judges were big names like George Lane, A. E. Cross, Pat Burns, Ray Knight, A. J. McLean and J. D. McGregor. Cowboys, cowgirls, bad horses and Longhorn steers converged upon Winnipeg and it was by far the biggest rodeo in Canada that year.

Winnipeg could claim some notable exhibition enterprises but the record was spotty. The path seemed to be strewn with pitfalls. Fenian invaders dealt the first blow, bloodless but effective. Buildings fell down, livestock were stolen, visitors became mired in the Red River mud, management came in for criticism and operations ceased. Manager Dr. A. W. Bell died suddenly in October, 1914. Whatever might be said about his managerial methods, he possessed the imagination required by a successful showman and as secretary of various Manitoba Livestock Associations, he was vigorous and popular.

When in late years, some citizens tried to begin again, ratepayers failed to support the cause. A money bylaw to build for an Exhibition was presented and defeated in 1946 and again in 1947. Why? Was it the record of reverses in earlier year or was it lack of appreciation of the benefits?

It is probably correct to say that Winnipeg is less conscious of agriculture than other western cities, but Winnipeg is a leader in manufacturing and should have much to gain from public demonstrations of its industrial resources. To many observers, the "Gateway City" will be seen always as a logical place for an exhibition permitting proper display of the products of farms and factories, or a Winter Fair at national level

### CHAPTER VI

### MOTHER OF EXHIBITIONS

"These institutions would dignify rural affairs, would excite a principle of emulation, would draw attention to useful discoveries and would gradually introduce a more effective and enlightened mode of practice."

John Young, Provincial Board of Agriculture, Nova Scotia, 1818.

For all practical purposes, Brandon's Exhibition is of the same age as Brandon. The fight for the townsite was settled in the spring of 1881, when river floods soaked Grand Valley, the landing place for steamboats and main contender for the favours of the Canadian Pacific Railway. After the flood, however, C.P.R. engineers lost no time in fixing upon the higher and drier location a short distance to the west, where homesteader Robert Adamson had a shanty, a well and a clothesline. It was the birth of the Wheat City and, later in the season, rails connected the site with Winnipeg.

The first passenger train arrived on October 11th of that year and exactly one year later, Brandon held a fair under the auspices of the Brandon Electoral Division Agricultural Society. John Grant, a settler of '79, drove to town with Henry Nichol, who was exhibiting a mare and a foal, and recalled that the show was held in an unfenced field about where the Winter Fair Buildings are located today. There were classes for cattle, horses, pigs, poultry and grains and \$200 in prize money had been raised from donations. But the settlers were scarcely ready for such an event and most of the classes were not filled. Of the 15 or 20 head of livestock on the grounds, most of them were the horses that brought the homesteaders to town.

John Grant said it wasn't much of a fair and Beecham Trotter, ("A Horseman and The West"), whose firm of

Trotter and Trotter brought three million dollars worth of horses to Western Canada, had some scornful comment about the grain classes. When it was realized that the cereal classes would be without competition, the officials, rather more resourceful than scrupulous, borrowed enough wheat and other grains from a local elevator, to allow several entries in each of the important classes. Judges tried to appear like jurists facing grave decisions and spectators criticized the decisions as much as though the competitions were genuine. What the critical spectator didn't know was that the first and second prize samples of wheat, about which argument arose, came from the same bin at the elevator.

Perhaps it wasn't much of a fair but there wasn't much to work with and at least it was a beginning. The next fair would be better. The next fair was better. Thirty-five acres were bought up for a fair grounds, a board fence was built and the frame structure placed in the centre of the lot given the dignified name of "Crystal Palace". Then the upstart Agricultural Society with Charles Whitehead, (who founded the Weekly Sun in 1882), as President, and Thomas Lockhart as Secretary, had the commendable audacity to apply to the Manitoba Board of Agriculture for authorization to hold the Provincial Exhibition in the year of 1883. And strangely enough, Brandon almost got the Provincial Exhibition; it was only when the President of the Board of Agriculture cast a deciding vote to break a tie, that Portage la Prairie was awarded the honour.

But the Brandon Society was determined to have a big far in spite of Portage la Prairie and the Board of Agriculture. The dates were October 9th and 10th, and a generous prize list was announced. Ten dollars was an attractive prize for a mature stallion and prizes for "Durham cattle", Herefords, "Polled Angus", Devons and Ayrshires were almost as good Holstein cattle were as yet unknown at Brandon. Horse races fared particularly well by the standards of that time and offered \$50, \$25 and \$10 for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes in the trotting event, and the same for a running race. That made a total racing purse of \$170 and some of the critics said it was a luxury.

Inside the "Palace" were poultry, dogs, handiwork, ladies work, dairy and garden produce, and manufactures.

manufactured articles were not in competition but where

manufactured articles were not in competition but where mudges recognized sufficient merit, diplomas were awarded.

Among the Special Prizes listed were a set of sleigh bells for the "best walking team;" a silver medal given by Brandon Sun for the "Best herd of not less than 10 cattle"; a set of ox harness for the "Best walking ox"; a caddy of tea for the "Best gag carpet"; and \$5 worth of stock food for the "Best Collection of sheep."

That second Fair at Brandon brought out a thousand entries and the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba opened the show. Grain classes attracted the most favourable comment, especially the entries of Red Fife wheat. Already Brandon was being seen as the "Wheat City;" partly because of high quality in wheat and partly because wheat was being hauled great distances, up to 100 miles, to be sold there.

Gayest thing at the fair was John Bradley's dray team, dressed and decorated; and competing for public admiration were Van Tassell's Durham cattle and Dan McCuaig's Percheron stallion, Black Duke. That pioneer Percheron, first of his breed for miles around, made such a good impression that two more Percheron stallions were brought to the district through the offices of the Agricultural Society, in 1884. These were obtained from the well known United States' breeder and importer, M. W. Dunham of Illinois and total cost was reported to be \$2600.

Directors concluded that prizes had been too generous and for the third annual Fair, (October 8, 9, 1884) there was a slight reduction. Special prizes, however, remained numerous and full of interest. Sometimes the "Specials" did not represent as much magnanimity as appeared outwardly. At the Fair of 1885 for example, what appeared as a handsome cash prize of \$15 was offered for the best 50 pounds of butter. and \$8 for the best 25 pounds of butter. But in each case there was a foxy stipulation that the prize butter would become the property of donor McKinnon. It would seem that the giver of the prize didn't mind paying just the slighest premium in order to ensure good butter for his family table. Also in that year, there was a "special" of a granite tea set offered for the "Handsomest sofa pillow", an award of \$5 from the Queen's Hotel for the "Fattest baby, 5 to 7 months old, from the country of Brandon"; and one dozen plated spoons for the "Best half dozen spring pigs." The latter seemed to work on at two spoons per pig or something like that.

Thereafter, fair days were Brandon's busiest during the year. Beecham Trotter tells how that hotels were full and the rigs and wagons that carried visitors from Rosser Avenue to the Fair at 15 cents per passenger made a month's wages in two days.

Brandon led the way in departing from autumn dates and held its 1889 fair in the month of July. The directors reasoned that Fall Fairs were all right for Ontario, but this was Manitobs and farmers would have more time to exhibit in midsummer than in the harvest month of September.

From this date forward, Brandon could claim the biggest and best draft horse show in all of Western Canada. When Str. Charles Tupper paid a visit in that year, Brandon's special entertainment was not a brass band, nor a massed choir; it was a parade of draft stallions, 25 of them, everyone tried and true. Whether the statesman was interested in horses was never considered, but in any case he must have been impressed by those symbols of power.

The city became the headquarters of many of the leading importers and breeders in the West and the Brandon of the nineties claimed more livery stables per city block than any place in the world. It was the centre from which stallions and mares, brought from Scotland, England, France, Belgium, United States and Ontario, were sold and reshipped to the new farming districts. It may have been the "horsiest" city in the world and nowhere were the tan-bark battles more deadly than those that gave character to the Brandon Exhibition and Brandon Winter Fair.

Every show brought new horses together, many of them champions in other lands. Manitoba farmers watched the outcome of the judging with as much eager tenseness as the Brandon people now watch a Junior Hockey final with the Wheat Kings one goal ahead. When the aged Clydesdale stallions were being judged at the 1892 exhibition, it was said that all the people on the fair grounds were crowding around the ring to see if Colquhoun's big Charming Charlie could beat the Harkness and Smith horse called Sir Arthur. Sir Arthur was a former winner, but Charming Charlie placed over him

and repeated it in each of the next two years to become the favorite topic of conversation on Rosser Avenue and at the Weekly Stable League, meeting between the rows of horses at Humesville Church stable, during the Sunday School hour. Said the Brandon Sun, "Everyone is not interested in a fat animal whether it be cattle, sheep or swine; but a good horse affects everybody." That was typical of Brandon sentiment.

Winnipeg returned to participate in Exhibitions in 1891 and Brandon was uneasy for fear that its show might be drowned in the wash. But Brandon, with the strongest agricultural traditions, had little to fear.

On the strength of the Fair of '92, the Farmer's Advocate, conscious of Brandon's fear, said,

"we feel confident this society will uphold the reputation they have already gained of having the best exhibition outside of Winnipeg. The Brandon district is especially strong in draft horses."

But after the next show, that of 1893, the same magazine (of Aug. 20, 1893) was even more reassuring to Brandon, saying, that from an agricultural standpoint, the Brandon Fair was more of a success than the Winnipeg Industrial." Brandon had the advantage of more breeders of pure bred livestock residing nearby. John E. Smith was winning the highest honours with his Shorthorns and Herefords and J. D. McGregor with Aberdeen Angus. And Brandon's grain exhibits were now proclaimed as the "Best in the West." A sample of wheat from the Brandon competition of that year won the gold medal at the International Millers' and Bakers' Exhibition in London. And so Brandon decided not to worry about Winnipeg competition.

But the struggling Exhibition had troubles of other kinds, among them financial. The annual meeting in February, 1894, heard grim news, a deficit of \$400 on the year's operations. But the finance committee, in the best treasury style, had a double-barrelled alibi, the hard times and the necessity of fixing the fence. Other gloom reported at the meeting, likewise not unfamiliar to Exhibition Managers of later years, was that the face horses permitted to occupy the stables had disrespectfully kicked holes through the walls.

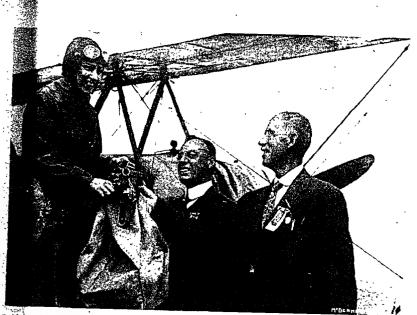
The Territorial Exhibition at Regina overshadowed every thing else in 1895, but the C.P.R. permitted the livested moving from Winnipeg Industrial and Portage la Prairie Far to stop for the show at Brandon and about 30 carloads filled the stables, taxed the water supply, used all the available bedding and exhausted the supplies of feed. It was an Inter-Provincial livestock show, at Regina's expense. But the bigger news story, nevertheless, was that the local Clydesdale stalling Sir Arthur, with a lot of admirers, had got his first revenge a four years, by beating Charming Charlie.

Back in 1892, the Brandon Agricultural Society applied in incorporation as the Western Agricultural and Arts Association of Manitoba, the new organization to take over the franchist assets and liabilities of the older body. Capital stock would consist of 1000 shares at \$10 each. The new charter was obtained but not until February, 1897, was the first annual meeting of shareholders held and directors appointed. S. A Bedford, who was Superintendent: of the Dominion Experimental Farm, became President and F. J. Clark, the manager Except for a period when he was at the South African War. Colonel Clark was the Brandon Secretary until 1908.

By approval of the Legislature, the new board could call it fair the Provincial Exhibition. Forty-two acres of land were bought and added to the existing grounds to make a total of 75 acres and the Manitoba Government was asked for a annual grant of \$5000. The Government pointed out, however, that it could not support two Exhibitions on a large scale and gave Brandon \$2.500.

Brandon had now reached a certain maturity in development and set about to improve its facilities. Directors authorized a board fence, extended the grandstand to seat 1200 people and dug wells and installed windmills to provide needed water, spending in all about \$12,000.

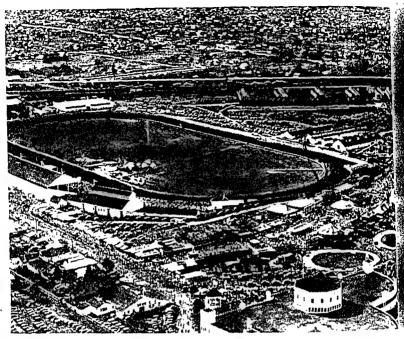
Brandon Exhibition had been rejuvenated. For its first Provincial Show, (Aug. 3-5, 1897), the Board offered \$5000 in prizes and pledged its determination to make the Exhibition a great force in the agricultural life of the Province. On Wednesday, 12,000 people attended and the Colonist wrote that an "unbroken procession of smart buggies, drawn by handsome horses and filled in every case by gaily dressed men



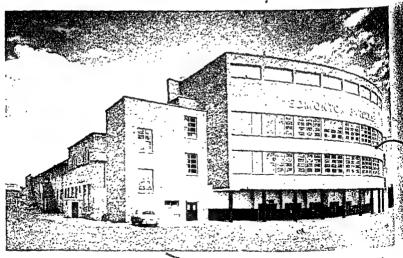
Aviatrix Katherine Stinson, arriving at Edmonton Exhibition in 1916 and delivering the first mail carried by plane in Canada. Left to right, Miss Stinson, Edmonton Manager W. J. Stark and Postmaster G. S. Armstrong.



Parade of Livestock at Edmonton, 1919. Frank Collicutt of Crossfield leads with the celebrated Gay Lad 16th.



Edmonton Exhibition Grounds from the Air.



Edmonton Gardens,

nd women, spoke volumes as to the general progress of the remers." And of the 12000 present that day, most of them atched the renewal of the old stallion fued between Charmer Charlie and Sir Arthur. They saw "Charlie" gain another ctory but they also saw Sir Arthur win a brand new class, or "stallion and six of his get."

One of the features of this year was a display of 60 native owers in bloom and a full collection of 30 noxious weeds, the tter being presented by the Provincial Weed Inspector, uch could have high educational value and it may be regretted hat more people since that time have not taken the opportantly to study the native flowers, native birds and other things hat are part of Western Canada.

Actually Brandon was becoming quite horticulture conscious. There was mounting proof of its ability to grow many kinds of egetables and fruits and in reporting the fair of 1898, the ress mentioned the revelation of tomatoes ripened outside, trawberries grown beside the Assiniboine, gooseberries "as hig as the end of a man's thumb," red currants "the size of therries" and rhubarb stalks big enough "to be used for rail tences." Jocularity could be pardoned; it went with confidence.

At about this time, H. L. Patmore, an exhibition director who had been in Manitoba from 1883 and in horticultural work at the Experimental Farm prior to embarking upon nursery work, made a new contribution to that public interest in horticulture. He undertook the landscaping and beautification of the grounds. It was a very great service and in the pring of 1900, he furnished the trees and shrubs from his nursery and set them out to make the Exhibition Grounds a povely park. Sometime later, all the trees and shrubs were labelled and thereafter, they served a double purpose, beautification and education.

The attractive horticultural setting suggested a zoo and, in 1905, the Board authorized the manager to buy two bears for \$75. By Exhibition time the zoological collection had increased and the Dominion Government donated a pair of buffalo. These majestic natives, portraying the Emblem of Manitoba, became permanent fixtures at the Exhibition Grounds and they with their offspring never ceased to be sources of interest to visitors in all months of the year.

Before leaving 1898, it should be noted that Brandon and Winnipeg had a strange new machine on display, one that pointed to new methods in harvesting and meant more than anybody witnessing it could have known. It was Conroy's Combined Harvester and Thresher, one of the few such machines built at Dechene in the Province of Quebec, and it was the forerunner of the modern combine, although nobody considered its future very seriously when it appeared at Brandon. It was not a big machine and it resembled its binder parent more than a thresher. Six horses were required to dravit.

After the Exhibition this premature combine was used on Mayor Evans' farm near Brandon and those who watched it working for the first time in Western Canada said it did a good job. But even though it was thirty years too soon and didn't have much appeal, it was a landmark in the evolution of farm machines.

Brandon tried to have something new each year. Then were the balloon ascension and parachute drop by "Professor" Cash and high wire performance by "Professor" Grant, in 1899. (A man had to have talent to be a professor in those years). In 1900 there was a building expansion and in 1901, the first Judging Competition in Western Canada was conducted.

A point of interest in the Exhibition of 1905 was the big Shorthorn steer, "Fergus" brought from Ontario for display purposes. As a calf and again as a yearling, he won his class at Guelph, and as a 2010 pound two-year-old he won the championship at Guelph and was proclaimed "the best bed model in America." At Brandon he shood as a three-year-old weighing 2540 pounds.

Brandon changed from a four-day to a five-day fair in 1907. The street cars were still a year away but visitors to the fair could buy an automobile ride around two city blocks for 20 cents.

Farm papers reported that Brandon's fair was drawing ahead of Winnipeg's. Said the Nor'-West Farmer,

"Brandon is a proud city and its pride is pardonable. For years it has been building up a national repu-

tation for its annual exhibition. But all the records of the past have been broken, a new high water mark has been set and from now onward comparisons will have to be made with the fair of 1909 . . . . . It has long been the ambition of Brandon to hold the biggest fair in Western Canada . . . . . Brandon outdid Winnipeg this year."

Not many people could look at horse breeds without prenuclice, but if there were any who could watch the horse ring
it Brandon, objectively, a new trend would have been sensed.
Quite suddenly, Percheron horses had risen to prominence,
nuirroring a farm interest in the French breed that was introduced much later than the Scottish Clydesdale. Brandon had
20 Percheron entries in 1908, and 87 in 1909. It was the first
major shock to Clydesdale complacency in that notorious
tronghold of the Clyde.

The fact was that all the leading breeds of livestock were dourishing and classes were keenly contested. Lord Ardwell was still winning the Clydesdale championships and a hundred other celebrated stallions were trying to dethrone him. John Barron, from Carberry, was dominating the Shorthorn ring; I. D. McGregor was bringing out most of the champions in Aberdeen Angus and William Shields of Brandon had an almost unbroken record of championships with his Hereford bull, Happy Christmas, 14 years of age when shown in 1911.

Right after the show of 1912, Brandon began preparations for the Dominion Exhibition to be staged there the next year.

W. I. Smale was now Manager, having been appointed in 1910. New stables were erected; a new race track was built and the grandstand was rebuilt and extended to seat 5000 guests. The Dominion Exhibition was a fine success. Barns could not hold all the livestock and a hundred head were quartered outside. Biggest section of the show was in Holsteins with breeders from all Western Provinces coming together. The amount actually paid in prizes was \$21,000, with an additional \$20,000 offered in speed events and \$25,000 for attractions, including plane flights.

Many of the visitors to the Brandon Fair in those years witnessed aviation for the first time. There were monoplane lights the year before the Dominion Exhibition and nobody

was killed. Many a mother bustled around to locate her child ren when the noisy motor of the plane pulled the thing into the air. One of the special attractions at the big Exhibition was a balloon performance. Each day its operator would rise with it into the clouds and then descend by parachute while the gradually deflating balloon returned more rapidly to earth There are those who recall the horrifying sight of an attendant dangling precariously by a rope about his wrist as the ballom 's went skyward on one of those days. While the big bag was being prepared for its flight, the attendant had carelessly allowed one of the ropes to become twisted about his wrist and when the lighter-than-air craft ascended, the unsuspecting helper went too. Terrified spectators expected to see the victim become released at some dizzy altitude and fall to his death Instead of abandoning the balloon and descending by parachute, the operator risked his own life by releasing the gas gradually and bringing baloon, human baggage and himself to earth. He did it, however, with nothing worse than a bad scare.

The "bird man" of 1914 did manoeuvres in the air that made visitors to the fair forget where they parked their buggies. A writer for the Grain Growers' Guide, (July 29, 1914), was one of those inspired by the performance of the pilot

"who soared up and up in a long, graceful spiral, who swooped and turned and flopped, who glided and slid thru the air until the birds themselves were lost in wonder at this new creature on wings."

For a half-grown Brandon boy with unusually big feet, there was a double thrill. He was there to witness the spectacle of flight about which the editor wrote and he was still there at the end of the week when the "Bird-Man" quit the boarding house close to where the MacEwans lived, and left behind him two pairs of patent leather, buttoned boots. Of all the feet in the community, only the MacEwan boy's seemed to be custom made to fit those boots, and nobody's need was greater. It wasn't every boy of 12 years who was privileged to fill the shoes of the hero aviator of that time.

When the MacEwan family went back to the land within the next year, the boy presented himself at the frontier school



in a 40 cent shirt, a 30 cent cap and a 25 dollar pair of patent teather, buttoned boots. He was the object of unhidden conjecture, but, worst of all, the new schoolboy companions never would accept the boast that the boots were those of the "Bird-Man" from Brandon Exhibition.

Came the war, the Brandon Grounds were placed at the disposal of the Government for use of the Remount Commission in moblizing horses for army purposes. It was not inconsistent with the equine traditions of the institution and nearly 10,000 horses were assembled there. As many asway, 500 were on the grounds at one time. But during both World Wars, the Exhibition was able to carry out its programmes in a somewhat contracted form, while allowing the Department of National Defence to use its buildings.

Through the years of the first Great War, exhibits and displays featured food production and conservation. In 1917, the Manitoba Agricultural College, then 11 years old, undertook to bring the College to the Fair. The display was constructed on ambitious lines and members of the College staff were present to make the educational effort most effective. There were displays on Butter Production, Beekeeping, Farm Libraries and Lightning Rods. Professor T. J. Harrison was in charge of the Agricultural Education booth; Professor F. W. Brodrick was there with a working model to convey a message about "Beautifying the Farm Home", and Professor Jackson stood under a sign, "Get the Gopher", with 1083 gopher tails piled up to show what could be done with one dollar's worth of poison.

Pedigreed animals are bought and sold fairly freely at allfairs and exhibitions and that is one of the useful features of such shows. J. D. McGregor, who originated many of the progressive innovations at Brandon, proposed an auction sale of his pure bred Aberdeen Angus cattle on the Grounds during the Exhibition week in 1918. One hundred and thirtyfire head, including the Glencarnock show herd of that year, sold for \$91,225, an average of \$666 per head. It was a record sale and both cattle sale and Exhibition seemed to benefit by the arrangement.

In 1919 the name was changed again. The cumbersome title, "Western Agricultural and Arts Association" was dropped

and "Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba" adopted. Nobody challenged the new name.

All the important trends in farm tractors and machinery could be charted by the displays at Brandon. Prior to the Dominion Exhibition, Brandon had acted upon Winnipeg's example and conducted Agricultural Motor Competitions. There were two classes, one for the old reliable steam engines, which had many unfailing admirers, and one for internal combustion engines with an uncertain future.

Most of the machines were slow moving and heavy, the kind that broke both the bridges and the farmers who bought them. Heavy pulls and ruggedness were the qualities about which the manufacturers boasted. The heavy Case steam tractors at the Exhibition were seen climbing to precarious heights on frame inclines built at an angle of 45 degrees (started in 1906); and a few rods away on Machinery Row, pine boards of one inch thickness were being fed into the cylinder of an Avery Yellow Boy separator just to prove that an occasional pitchfork dropped into the feeder by mistake would not wreck a good machine.

Now, in 1916, the Exhibition was heralding a new era in motor power. It was like a Chinook wind on which rides a change in winter weather. The trend was toward lighter motors and more of them. The horse barns were still full but the roar of engines filled the air. Automobiles were becoming sufficiently common that some of the Brandon horses had given up the idea of running away every time they saw one. Local newspapers reported that Manitoba people had driven distances up to 80 miles to attend the Exhibition and would return the same day. Brandon had auto racing and Miss Stinson's aviation performances and in a field adjacent to the Fair Grounds was Brandon's first Farm Tractor Ploughing Demonstration.

The Brandon directors reasoned that before a man buys a horse, he wants to see it in action. The same should apply to a tractor. What Brandon offered in 1916 was not a contest, but an opportunity for manufacturers to demonstrate their light tractors while actually ploughing and farmers to observe.

Nineteen kinds of tractors put out by 13 manufacturing firms operated and some 3000 farmers and others followed



them up and down the furrows. Most of the tractors used kerosene but in shape and design, no two were quite alike.

Brandon repeated its Farm Tractor Ploughing Demonstrations in 1917 when 48 outfits took to the field and again in 1918 when the Fordson Tractor, of which the Canadian Government had bought 2000 to be sold at cost, made its formal appearance.

It caused consternation in certain circles that for the first time something else was attracting as much farmer attention as the horse ring. President Archie McPhail said he would continue to breed horses, but believed nevertheless that those small tractors capable of relieving farm help problems would revolutionize agriculture.

Thereafter, Machinery Row was an even bigger attraction, except during the years of the Second World War when regulations forbade machinery demonstrations. In the post-war years, however, the Manitoba Wholesale Implement Association co-operated with the Exhibition to set up displays. A million dollars worth of machinery, most of it in operation, was on view in 1948 and Mr. Farmer saw equipment that could improve his efficiency, machines that would relieve toil and hardship, and mechanical inventions that would save labour and money. He learned that he could make hay without the necessity of using a pitchfork, load and spread manure without a five-tined fork, mix concrete without shovelling, and dig post holes without the toil and blisters that formerly went with a hand auger.

Coupled with such machines were those electrical appliances that could be used in conjunction with Manitoba's expanding Rural Electrification programme and capable of changing the character of life on Manitoba farms.

While machinery displays became more important, livestock competitions did not become less important. The stabilizing influence of the annual programme of livestock events was needed in the western agricultural community and Brandon's Exhibition was not relaxing. Brandon had the strongest livestock traditions; there the livestock rings had always been the central feature of the Exhibition; there the Junior Calf Feeding Contests, which became continent-wide, were born and there the Farm Boys' Camps were carried on; there that great-

est Aberdeen Angus bull of his generation, Blackcap Revolution, made his only Canadian showyard appearances and there the most important ring decisions were made in heavy horses. It was the best place at which to take the "pulsebeat" of the livestock business.

S. C. McLennan, who became Manager in 1945, showed a Highland determination to maintain those livestock traditions, to keep the Provincial Exhibition close to the people of Manitoba and to strengthen its reputation as the "Farmers' Fair." Brandon didn't have the oldest or the biggest Exhibition but in many respects, Brandon's was the "Mother of Western Exhibitions."

## CHAPTER VII

## NORTHERN LIGHTS

"Pride in our people increases as we study their aims; and an intimate knowledge of the hardships and trials that befell them in pursuing these aims, engenders in us an enduring love and reverence for the memory of these men and women, who with infinite patience, courage and endurance, established well the foundations of our national greatness."

T. G. McKitrick.

EDMONTON IS ONE OF THE OLDEST NAMES ON THE PRAIRIES and when the first fair was held at that outpost on the North Saskatchewan River in 1879, Brandon, Vancouver and Saskatoon did not exist; Regina was a Pile of Bones; Moose Jaw was nothing more than a creek; Calgary was a Mounted Police post and Winnipeg was a city in infancy. For years, Fort Edmonton had existed by and for the fur trade but with a diminishing interest in trapping and a growing interest in farming, enterprising citizens began to recognize a new purpose.

It was a year of importance elsewhere in the West. The rails reached Winnipeg from the East and the first big cattle round-up took place in the South-West. Buffalo slaughter had just passed its crest and Frank Oliver was making plans to cart a printing press from Winnipeg to that primitive little settlement, isolated from civilization by a thousand miles of bad roads.

Because Edmonton was the Hudson's Bay Company supply depot for the Northern posts, there was some demand for grains and produce. Furthermore, the Company mill on the south side of the river ground wheat for local needs and for far flung posts. But notwithstanding opportunities, the farms nearby had remained small and unimpressive. Expansion such

as there was came from the adoption of cultivation by retired Hudson's Bay Company servants, trappers and unemployed buffalo hunters, more than from any influx of settlers.

But the organization of the Edmonton Agricultural Society with Lieut.-Col. W. D. Jarvis as president, signalled a change. Here was evidence of agricultural vigour. No Government grant was forthcoming and there was no outside revenue, but the necessity of depending entirely upon the generosity of its own people didn't discourage it. By public subscription, the sum of \$323 was raised and just over half, namely \$173, was offered as prizes at the first fair on October 15, 1879. (Sask. Herald, Nov. 17, 1879). The balance of the money was used to bring seed grain from the outside.

It wasn't the first fair in the West, but it was the first in the Territories and it was held at the Hudson's Bay Company Fort where Chief Factor Richard Hardisty offered the use of two rooms for inside exhibits and such outdoor space as might be needed for the livestock.

There were classes for Team of Horses, Yoke of Oxen, Fat Ox, Brood Mare and Foal, Stallion and Saddle Horse, but the livestock entry was light. The indoor exhibits were better. One room in the fort was set apart for Ladies' Work, including leather goods and homespun woollens, while the second room was for grains and vegetables. Owing to the lateness of the season and the fact of there being only two small threshing machines in the district, the grain show was smaller than expected. The real strength of the fair was in the vegetables and neighbour vied with neighbour to show the biggest potatoes, the longest carrots and the heaviest turnips.

Pride of the fair was in the carrots, said to measure three and one-half to four inches in diameter, and 20 to 24 inches in length. Neither Toronto nor Winnipeg was likely to better that, either in carrots or fantasies. And the winner in potatoes claimed a yield of 1300 busheds from less than two and one quarter acres of land, some of which was broken for the first time that spring.

One of the most keenly contested classes was for the "Best Collection of Vegetables" for which the first prize was five dollars in cash and two dollars worth of seeds donated by the Saskatchewan Herald, published at Battleford, by the pioneer,

P. G. Laurie. The Roman Catholic Mission at Big Lake (St. Albert) won first for onions, first for cabbage, first for cheese, second for butter and second for carrots. S. Taber won the Governor's Prize of \$10 for the best wheat; D. Ross won the corresponding honour in oats and S. Lampreux for barley.

"Mr. Brusseau" was named as the winner of second prize for saddle horses. He was probably the horseman who, as "E. Brazeau", is reported in the Edmonton Bulletin of February 7, 1881, to have bought the running horse, Big Knee, for \$200, from Abram Selwyn, and to be "prepared to run anything around Edmonton a 3/4 mile race at any time."

It would seem that the love of horse racing at Edmonton is as old as the fair. In the issue of December 27, 1880, there is another, rather typical announcement from one who could not wait until fair time:

"Challenge — I will run any horse within fifty miles of Edmonton, for any amount, within one month. Put up or shut up. J. Campbell, Edmonton Hotel."

The year that followed upon the first fair was one of progress. Better mills for sawing and grinding were freighted from Winnipeg and set up to serve the settlement. And new farm machinery sold to the homesteaders foretold of more extensive operations. Until two or three years before, agricultural machinery, outside of hand tools, was almost unknown, but machinery deliveries in that year of 1880, according to the Edmonton Bulletin, (December 20, 1880) included:

"One steam saw, shingle and threshing machine, 1 self binding harvester, 11 reaping machines, 10 mowing machines, 10 sulky rakes, 73 ploughs, 11 fanning mills and 19 iron and wooden harrows. This represents a value of nearly \$16,000 delivered here. In addition to this the Hudson's Bay Company has erected and will shortly have in running order a 50 horse power steam saw and grist mill, while Messrs. McLeod, Morris and Belcher, have erected one of 25 horse power."

The character of the Annual Fair did not change much in the next 20 years, except that it became bigger. In 1893, Angus McKay of the Experimental Farm at Indian Head, took a fine display of grains and grasses to Edmonton Fair (on October 10 and 11), only to be humiliated by repeated remarks by local people that the crops there had far surpassed the Experimental Farm products.

Just across the river at South Edmonton, a new Society was organized in 1894. It was the Strathcona Agricultural Society and for a few years there was no more enterprising body of its kind. It may have had the first fairs at which special classes were offered for boys and girls and it is known that the Strathcona Society did progressive work with crops. At one time (1899) the directors proposed that an experimental station be conducted in conjunction with the Society and on the Fair Grounds. They consulted Angus McKay about setting up such crop tests as would have the maximum demonstration value at fair time. The idea did not develop farther, but it had merit. For a time, the Strathcona Society overshadowed Edmonton's fair organization.

The new Agricultural Society across the river spurred Edmonton to bigger things. The year 1894 became important. On April 14th, the Society held a Spring Show with classes for horses and seed grains, and at the Fall Fair, 1000 entries were brought forward. The Indian exhibit of that year featured 80 varieties of vegetables with three cabbages having an alleged total weight of 128 pounds. But the concensus of opinion was that they had been weighed on a fisherman's scales. Anyway, the best of the exhibits were ordered left in place for the purpose of impressing Lord Aberdeen whose visit followed. Unfortunately, they couldn't hold the livestock and poultry for the distinguished visitor but they repeated the horse races which Edmonton people would do at any time for any reason. Moreover, they held the brass band in readiness, also that musical wonder of the show, a phonograph.

Every early fair had its Special Prizes and many of them were "Unusual" as well as "Special." Edmonton had some with a humorous twist. According to an old timer, there were certain "Specials" not given space in the printed prize list.

The unrecorded and unconfirmed story is that a local lawyer announced that for the Best Team of Farm Horses, his special prize would be \$25 in legal fees, to be applied only in case of divorce proceedings. A doctor in town said he would do as



much and offered medical services to the amount of \$25 for the best collection of grains, with the provision that the credit would be good only in payment for an amputation, should the winner require such. A church minister of undisclosed denomination, not going to be outdone, was ready to perform a marriage ceremony for the winner in the class for bread made by bachelors, at any time within view years, without expectation of a fee.

In 1900, notice was given through the Territorial Gazette of the incorporation of Edmonton Industrial Exhibition Association, with capital stock of \$15,000 divided into \$25 shares. The Association proposed buying a piece of land on the north side of the river and within the town limits, from the Hudson's Bay Company, the purpose being to make a permanent grounds.

The land was bought and in 1901 a fair on a bigger scale was attempted, but with only moderate success. Weather was unco-operative; roads were so bad that judges appointed by the Government failed to arrive. But Edmonton's Annual Fair programme was launched on a broader foundation and it went on to exhibition leadership.

The Fair of 1902 was the biggest seen in that part and everybody was happy about the new location. Natural beauty characterized the grounds and most gratifying to Edmonton was that a considerable number of Calgary people had come all the way, expressly to see a good fair.

The Edmonton Exhibition was anxious to sense the needs of the settlers and to give leadership of the kind most needed. Toward those ends a public meeting was called for February 27th, 1907, and notices were tacked up beside every trail for miles around. Farmers were invited to voice their criticism of the Agricultural Society's programme and suggest how it could be made more useful.

Out of that meeting came two points. The first was that the farmers showing livestock at the fair loved to see the horse races as much as anybody and therefore the judging should be halted at an appropriate time each day to let everybody enjoy the contests on the track. The second point concerned classes for boys and girls.

The management was quick to implement the suggested improvements. Programmes for juniors began with the judg-

ing competitions set up for "Farmers and Farmers' Sons", at the summer show that year. Edmonton had benefited by the example of the Strathcona Society. The medal for the farmer's son making the best showing in the judging was won by A. J. Ottewell from Clover Bar.

The Edmonton Board was proud of its progress and formally advised the young Government of Alberta that its annual summer fair was entitled to the name, Provincial Exhibition.

There was reorganization early in 1908 and the new charter was in the name of the Edmonton Exhibition Association. The Exhibition was growing, but so were its debts and its troubles. Calgary was host to the Dominion Exhibition that year and to leave the July period uncontested for the neighbouring city, Edmonton took June dates. But June rains were heavy, resulting in reduced attendance and a big financial loss. Grants didn't amount to much and it was difficult for any expanding fair or exhibition to stand alone at that period.

The financial situation was made more difficult by the necessity of erecting barns and other buildings and it led to a completely new working arrangement. The City of Edmonton took over the debt-ridden Exhibition Plant and did it without restricting the operation of the programme. In the re-constituted Board of Directors, 30% of the members were to be representatives from the City Council; 30% were to come from the farming community; 20% from the Board of Trade; and 20% from the Racing organizations.

This division of representation was changed somewhat when the Articles of the Edmonton Exhibition Association were amended in December, 1914. Thereafter the directors numbered 25, "of whom 13 shall be representatives nominated and appointed by the council of the City of Edmonton and 12 elected by the Company."

The Edmonton Association and the Strathcona Agricultural Society were getting together in 1908. They sent a joint exhibit for the District Competitions at the Dominion Exhibition at Calgary and felt jointly annoyed at the space and location allotted by their dear neighbour. And then those two organizations, separated only by the North Saskatchewan River, asked themselves why amalgamation to stage a bigger and better Exhibition to be known as "Alberta Twin City Exhibition", or

simply "Edmonton Exhibition", should not be in the best interests. Four years later the two cities were united and the former City of Strathcona became known as South Edmonton.

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The Exhibition site question was still unsettled. Directors tried to buy an adjacent piece of property from the Hudson's Bay Company, but without success. An alternative plan was approved and a new Exhibition home on the east side of the City was announced. The show of 1909 was the last on the attractive property on the river flats, below the Old Fort.

At last the Exhibition would have a permanent location with the much-needed additional space. A. G. Harrison, secretary-manager at that time, saw the undeveloped fair grounds as an unusual challenge in planning. Directors rallied to support Harrison's idea and announced a contest in which three prizes of \$250, \$150 and \$75 would be paid for the best plans sub-mitted for the laying out of the new Exhibition Grounds. When the competition ended (Feb. 28, 1910), first prize was awarded to P. Rule and the reconstructed Board set out to build the best possible design into the park and plant. A \$175,000 building programme was prepared and a city bylaw to authorize such an expenditure was submitted early in 1911 and passed. A grand-stand to seat 6000 people was included in the plan.

Shareholders were called to a meeting on August 20, 1908, to discuss Winter Fairs. A Fall Fair, featuring the fruits of gardens and fields, was seen as something that could be started without delay, and a Winter Fair for livestock as something demanding more in the way of facilities. The first Winter Fair, taking the form of a Horse Show and Bull Sale, was staged in the spring of 1911, with the firm assurance that \$100,000 of the money voted for improvements would be used immediately to build a Livestock Pavilion.

At the Exhibition of that year, the horse section offered something entirely new and particularly popular. The committee reasoned that race horses, pleasure horses and breeding horses of all types had been given a lot of recognition, but

ing horses of all types had been given a lot of recognition, but the faithful animal working day by day on city streets, was the "Forgotten Horse".

A gigantic Work Horse Parade for street horses was organized and about 400 head were entered in the contests and festival. There were dray horses, van horses, bread-wagon. horses, brewers' horses, fire horses and horses of many other categories. It was the first time that such a feature had been attempted in Canada and Edmonton offered it as the highlight of Citizens' Day.

The highest honour of the day, intended to be at the Grand Championship level, was the award entitled, "The Horse of the Street". In deciding this and other prizes in the many competitions, suitability for the work, general appearance of horses, condition and care reflected by the animals, were considered. Ill-fitting harness, sore shoulders and harness galls counted against the contestants, because one prime purpose of the programme was to encourage better and more humane care for all animals.

It was repeated many times that the purpose of the Street Parade had been achieved and that Edmonton horses enjoyed better treatment thereafter.

Old Jack, the ancient fire-horse, was a favorite with most Edmontonians, but the winners in the "Veterans' Class", for horses working on the streets for more than ten years, were Jock and Pete, 20 and 21 years old respectively and still enjoying maximum fitness after 13 years of toil on those city roads. Against Jock and Pete in that class for Old Timers, were a dozen horses or more, ranging from 18 to 25 years of age.

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Said the director in charge, "it was one of the best things Edmonton has done". It was a nice bit of sentiment and the public applauded. It proved beyond all doubt that most people, if they stop to think about it, love horses. But it had more than sentimental value; it helped to bring into sharper focus, those horse types best suited for street work.

The judge of Light Horses at the Exhibition of that year

The judge of Light Horses at the Exhibition of that year was W. J. Stark, a young man from Toronto, where he had been connected with the Toronto Exhibition. The Edmonton people were fascinated by him. Just one year before that, directors had voted to place the position of Secretary-Manager on a full time basis, and on January 1st, 1912, Stark was appointed to manage the growing Edmonton Exhibition. In that position he remained until his death late in 1928.

Times were changing at a rapid rate. Directors in solemn session in February, 1912, agreed that the manager be permitted "to engage a stenographer". It was an ambitious step



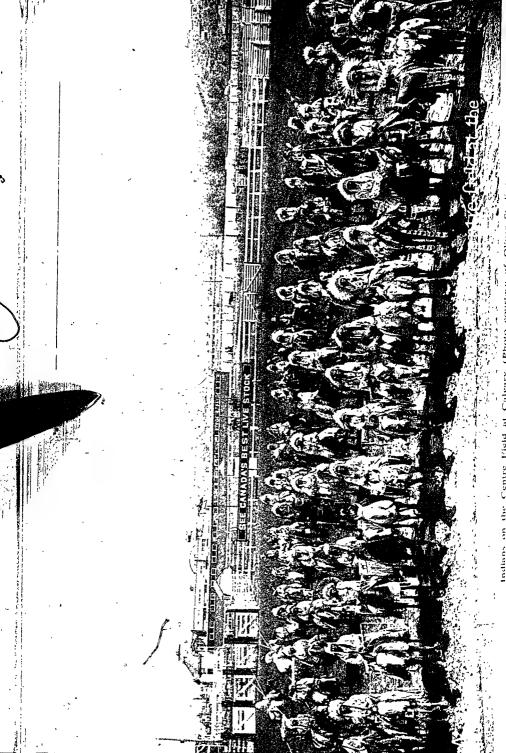
Regina When the First Fair was Held.



General View of Exhibition Grounds, Regina, in 1895.



Slim" Moorehouse drove his 32-horse and mule outfit, hauling eight wagon tanks baded with wheat, to Calgary Exhibition and Stampede in 1924. The outfit was as long as a city block and driven with four pairs of reins (reins to 1st, 6th, 12th and lead teams.



forward, or so some of the directors considered it. The famous "Two Percent Beer" or "Temperance Beer", that the directors outlawed from the Exhibition Grounds (June 16, 1909) was rearing its alcoholic shadow again. And Pari-mutuel machines were bought to be used for the first time at the Exhibition of 1913. But when a formal request to raffle off a monkey at the Exhibition was made, Directors considered thoughtfully and refused. It was probably all right to bet on horses, but not to gamble on monkeys; furthermore, there was the question of what Calgary would say about "monkey business" at Edmonton's Exhibition.

The Pari-mutuel machines proved to be a profitable investment and in their initial year, showed a net return of \$6,781. The Exhibition officers felt the flush of prosperity for the first time and gave the Edmonton City Council the biggest shock in its civic career by voting a grant of \$6,000, "to be used as City Council sees fit". It was a complete reversal of time-honoured Exhibition practice, but it did not become a habit!

The Pavilion was completed and the Winter Fair held early in 1914 took on a more imposing and glamorous appearance. It had the best Light Horse Show that Edmonton people had seen and the jumping classes made history. One of the exceptional features of the jumping was the performance of the celebrated horse, Smoky, owned by D. P. McDonald of Cochrane. His record jump of six feet, 11½ inches, was made at that Winter Fair.

It was Manager Stark's contention that the Exhibition should be a teacher and that new and better teacher methods should be sought. "Contrast is a good teaching aid", said he; "let's try it using livestock; let's give as much prominence to the poor types as we usually do to the good ones". In 1914 the Edmonton Exhibition Board co-operated with the Alberta Department of Agriculture in setting up an educational display that gave as much instruction in identifying inferiority in animals as in recognizing superior qualities.

In quarters constructed expressly for the purpose, there were good steers, dehorned and with approved conformation, worth seven cents a pound on the market. Sharing stalls with the good ones were long-faced, narrow-backed; leggy

steers with dairy conformation and prominent horns, worth four cents a pound.

As part of the same display were high producing dairy cows, and with them, small-uddered, droopy-rumped cows of proven low production. With the good wether lambs worth six cents a pound, were unfinished, undocked and unwanted lambs, commanding not more than three and one-half cents per pound. The same thing was done with pigs. It was an effective demonstration and those people who leaned over the bars, gazed at and studied the culls as much as the superior types.

To make 1915 a distinctive year, the Demonstration Train operated by the Provincial Department of Agriculture was spotted on the Grounds for the week, and there was the biggest showing of Percheron horses seen in Canada up to that time. Edmonton had the Percheron Futurity classes, started at Winnipeg Industrial two years before and held at Lethbridge one year before. George Lane of Bar U Ranch was President of the Canadian Percheron Association and brought 25 head of Alberta-bred horses to the Fair, and amid strong competition, won both stallion and mare championships. The stallion champion was Icare.

The Percheron breed made one of its best advances through the demonstration at that time. The point was made that whatever criticisms might have been heard about some of the early specimens brought to this country, Canadian breeders could set their own standard of ideals and could have muscular bodies on good wearing feet and legs.

Toward the end of the First World War, the livestock industry flourished as never before. Prices were high and Exhibition barns were full. Hon. Duncan Marshall opened the Exhibition of 1917 and reminded Edmonton that

"Agriculture and livestock will be the foundation of all the prosperity of this western country. It is for the Exhibitions to encourage and stimulate and guide."

From the competitions of that year, it seemed that Edmonton was doing a good job in encouraging and stimulating. It was a livestock show to which students will continue to refer with interest. There was something unusual about the number

of breed celebrities out that year, although the full significance could not be known at that time.

For those familiar with the names of the breed aristocrats of an earlier generation, Edward Garnet, one of the great show stallions of his time was champion Clydesdale for Ben Finlayson; Marvel was grand champion Percheron stallion for George Lane; Korndyke Posch Pontiac was champion Holstein male for J. H. Laycock and Emperor of Ravensdale was champion Ayrshire bull for Roland Ness.

A senior bull calf winning the Aberdeen Angus champion-ship was recognized as a sensational specimen. He was Black-cap McGregor, a bull that became a leading sire of the breed and one of the best known show animals in Canada, the property of J. D. McGregor. John Barron's young bull, Jubilee Star, was the shorthorn champion, and topping all in Herefords was the much publicized Martin Fairfax for which George Fuller of Girvin, Saskatchewan, paid \$17,000. Many people attended the Exhibition with no bigger curiosity than to see what \$17,000 wrapped in a beef hide really looked life.

Exhibition attendance exceeded the 100,000 mark for the first time in 1919 and was repeated in 1926 when another record was established, a record of 10,000 automobiles coming to the fair.

The Exhibition of the latter year was pronounced the greatest to that time. The Coldstream Guards' Band was in attendance and as an additional grandstand attraction, a Historical Pageant with 600 people in the cast and 200 in the choir, was presented. It was to commemorate the 21st Anniversary of the founding of the Province and it told of personalities and events in the development of the West, Indians, exploration, fur trade, Fort Edmonton, Sir George Simpson, the last clash between Blackfoot and Cree Indians, the arrival of Father Lacombe and the Methodist McDougalls, the Mounted Police, Frank Oliver and his printing press, the first school in Edmonton, the Klondike Gold Rush, birth of the Province, arrival of new citizens from other lands and the Edmonton Exhibition.

Special Guest of Honour at that Exhibition was Engine Number 103, the locomotive that drew the first Canadian Northern Railroad train into Edmonton on November 24, 1905.

A special track on the Exhibition Grounds was built for it and later, the pioneer engine was presented to the City.

Another reason for remembering that Exhibition of 1926 was the inauguration of the intensely stimulating District Exhibits, New Westminster fashion. Each district that entered was allotted a space of fifteen feet by eight feet and the display was judged on points according to the following score card:

Fruits in the Display.	20	points
Vegetables and Roots	70	- ,,
Dairy Products and Eggs	55	"
Grains and Sheaves of 1925	60	"
Sheaf Grains of 1926	40	**
Forage Plants of 1926	40	**
Honey Products	15	"
General Presentation	50	"
		<del>`</del>
•	350	"

In 1929 the Edmonton Exhibition celebrated its 50th Anniversary and invited the pioneer nation builder, Honourable Frank Oliver, to officiate at the opening. It was an appropriate arrangement. Frank Oliver attended the first fair in 1879 and it was he who reported the event for the Saskatchewan Herald. In opening the Anniversary Exhibition, he told his audience about the first meal he had in Edmonton, consisting of potatoes and boiled muskrats; about Bill Cust, the old gold miner who became the first real farmer at Edmonton and brought in the first self binder and first steam engine from Fort Garry; about Tom Smith who hauled a steam threshing machine from Winnipeg; and about the first domestic bees brought to the district by Thomas Henderson and Robert Knowles in 1888. Frank Oliver concluded by reminding his listeners that

"The blanket of black soil that covers the prairies from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains contains greater wealth than all the gold mines in the world."

By the time of that 50th Anniversary, Edmonton had an Exhibition plant worth three quarters of a million dollars. It was one of the best; it was built according to a plan. And the management of that time was particularly anxious that the character of the Exhibition would ensure a part for everybody.



It seemed that everybody around the city of the North had an interest in the races. It was apparent all through the years when every conceivable kind of race was staged, Ox Races, Mule Races, Pony Races, Farmers' Races, Relay Races and Marathon Races, as well as ordinary Harness Races and Running Races. There was nothing unusual about it when the owner of a Hackney stallion offered \$250 if the Exhibition would match it for a Hackney Stallion Trotting Race (1911). Racing records for the Province, for Western Canada and all Canada were made repeatedly at Edmonton.

It was to be the people's Exhibition. Agricultural and industrial exhibits and horse racing would be continuous, while new and unusual features intended to reach new groups of citizens were planned to appear each year. Amateur Horse-Shoe pitching Championships for the Province offered a rallying place for a certain group one year and a Trap-Shooting Tournament another year, for example. The principle was right enough.

During the Second World War, Edmonton's plant became an important military depot and Exhibitions were suspended for the duration. But at War's end, and the return of the grounds, the Edmonton Board began to build. When James Paul succeeded Charles Wilson as secretary-manager in 1948, an immense Stock Pavilion, 170 feet by 350 feet, with sale and judging ring and capacity for 600 head of farm animals, was being completed. Surrounding the new pavilion was additional accommodation for 45 carloads of cattle and a thousand head of cattle to be shown as "singles". It was partly for Summer Exhibition use and partly for the biggest annual showing of fat cattle in western Canada.

With big interests in Senior Hockey and some imposing championship trophies, the Edmonton Board enlarged its arena to accommodate more of those Northern Albertans who love a good hockey game in the winter as they love a good horse race in the summer. A better building deserves a better name and the remodeled arena was given the more distinctive name, Edmonton Gardens. It was there for service and could be used for ice sports in the winter, a Horse Show in the spring, a circus in the summer or a public meeting or Celebrity Concert at any time. And a new Grandstand, to seat 8000 people while

not ready for the 1950 Exhibition, was near enough to completion to win approval as a mid-century symbol of progress.

Edmonton, with half a continent of North-Land for its back yard, became the metropolis of the North-West, just as Pioneer Missionary John McDougall said it would do. It was surrounded by fertile soil, progressive farms, natural beauty and sprouting oil derricks. And the Exhibition, with a span of service exceeding 70 years, had a place of growing importance.

## CHAPTER VIII

## TERRITORIAL EXHIBITION TO WORLD GRAIN SHOW

"The world's all right; serene I sit, And joy that I am part of it, And put my trust in nature's plan, And try to aid her all I can; Content to pass, if in my place I've served the uplift of the Race. Truth! Beauty! Love! O Radiant Day—What ho! the world's all right, I say."

Robert W. Service.

Until the year of the cyclone, Regina's datum line was 1895. Citizens reckoned time as before and after the Territorial Exhibition of that year. What the "Century of Progress" meant to Chicago, the "Territorial" was to the sprawling, unpainted metropolis on the plains and the surrounding homestead country. Regina was at the "awkward stage" in growth with fewer than two thousand people. But it was a precocious youth and the Territorial was the most ambitious and successful fair in the new West to that time.

When in after years, settlers heard tales about the World's Fair<sup>3</sup> at St. Louis, they enquired, half in earnest, half in jest, "how would it compare with the Territorial?"

There were earlier fairs at Regina. The first one was in 1884, only two years after the name was changed from Pile of Bones,\* and two years after the arrival of the rails. There were still those citizens who favoured the old homespun name, (as there are today) and Winnipeg papers were still writing

<sup>\*</sup>Pile of Bones was the name until August 23, 1882 when the first train arrived from the East and Judge Johnson of Montreal renamed the new town, the name being suggested by Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria and wife of the Governor General of Canada.

unkind editorials about the location of the new capital of the North West Territories and its dismal future.

Those papers criticized Governor Dewdney for the selection of a site where soil was poor, where trees would not grow, where the miserable little creek would not make a respectable swimming hole for the school boys and where water was scarce and "unfit for horses". The Winnipeg Sun wrote facetiously:

"The police at Regina are melting snow for their use and also for their horses . . . . Just after a snowfall you see a rush of persons with baskets, blankets, etc., to collect the snow. A man who has a heavy snow bank on his place has a bonanza and is looked up to by his less fortunate neighbours."

The inference was that Regina had no future and if the homesteaders wanted livestock, camels would be more appropriate than cattle. But settlers like Robert Sinton and James Grassick were unimpressed by the jibes and made it clear that they were there to stay and to build and make some of the eastern editorial writers repent their sarcasm. Robert Sinton, as he celebrated his 96th birthday (in 1950) recalled that when the shortage of water was becoming embarrassing in 1883, he dug a well on his property at the corner of Albert and South Railway streets and struck a good supply that furnished—that end of town and the livestock attending the fairs until the municipal system was installed.

In spite of published criticism, the newcomers were beginning to see the Regina area as a mighty granary and the Assiniboia Agricultural Society was formed and a fair held in the fall of 1884. William White who was Regina's first representative on the Council of the North West Territories, was the manager and one hundred and fifty people attended.

Apart from grains and vegetables, there was practically no competition. It was a humble beginning but the newly formed Society recognized other tasks. At the first annual meeting, the president urged that the society try to secure a grist mill and a pork packing plant for that area. Even at that early date, he recognized the advantages of excluding all except the best varieties of wheat and appealed to farmers to seed none except Red Fife. At the same time he announced that two Fall Fairs

would be held, one to be the Society's annual event and the other, a special show for the purpose of collecting exhibits from various parts of the Territories to send to London, England, for an Empire Exhibition in 1886.

For the second Annual Fair, a prize list was published. (Copy in Legislative Library, Winnipeg). The dates were October 15 and 16 and thus the fair preceded the hanging of Louis Riel at Regina by an even month. Already, wheat was king at Regina. Exhibitors of seed grains received bigger prizes than the cattlemen and horsemen. The first prize for a two-bushel bag of wheat was eight dollars and for a mature stallion or a three-year old Durham bull, it was only four dollars. The emphasis was on wheat and in line with the policy stated by the president, Red Fife was the only variety for which there was competition. To add support to the presidential convictions, western grown Red Fife wheat won the Medal of Merit at the Exhibition at Antwerp, Belgium, that year.

The classification for oats was exactly the same as for pigs, one class for black ones and one for white, with no other descriptive details. The cattle show had four divisions, Durhams, Devons, Grades and Oxen, and in sheep there were classes for Leicesters, Cotswolds and Downs.

In the "Special Prizes" one senses much of the thinking of the times. The biggest award in the show was twenty-five dollars from the Lieutenant Governor for the best two bushels of any grain, and Society President, D. F. Jelly, offered fifteen dollars for the best herd of Durham cattle. The Manager of the Bank of Montreal gave ten dollars for the "largest and best" collection of poultry, and from various donors came "a suit of clothes valued at eighteen dollars" for the best two bushels of Red Fife wheat, a set of ox harness worth ten dollars for the best yoke of oxen, a pair of riding breeches of eight dollars value for the best saddle horse, 'a wringer valued at seven dollars and fifty cents for the best lady rider, one thousand shingles for the best Berkshire boar, and a six dollar rocking chair for the best Durham bull. They were attractive prizes and they brought out a good entry.

The fair was local in character but until 1888 when the Fair and the Society languished, neither the livery stables nor the

hotels were big enough to accommodate the horses and the people who came to exhibit or celebrate. Seeds and domestic work were given inside accommodation but the animals were tied to fence posts and shown in a vacant lot. The last fair to be held in the downtown section was in 1894, in which year the Indian Head Experimental Farm provided a popular educational display, featuring grains, grasses, potatoes, weeds and an object lesson about the use and value of bluestone in controlling smut.

Then it was announced that Regina would have Dominion Government support for a monster show in 1895. It was to be an Agricultural Extravaganza and intended to provide a stimulus for the Territories. It was to be "an education for twenty-five cents". The idea was well received but no single person did more to promote it than Lieutenant-Governor Mackintosh. The Canadian Government voted twenty-five thousand dollars for its support while the Territorial Legislature and the Regina Council promised ten thousand dollars each. And the Canadian Pacific Railway offered to transport exhibits to and from the Exhibition free of charge.

Such unexpected generosity in financial aid made it possible to announce the biggest prize list ever offered by an Exhibition west of Toronto. A prize list totalling nineteen thousand dollars seemed almost staggering at a time when good steers were selling at three cents a pound and wheat at fifty cents a bushel.

The secretary for the big fair was R. B. Gordon and on the Executive Board there appeared many familiar names, Angus McKay of Indian Head, Fred Stinson of Bar U Ranch, W. Cochrane of Cochrane Ranch, Thomas McKay of Prince Albert, Major Bell of Bell Farm at Indian Head, and Michael Oxarat who operated a ranch and bred Thoroughbred horses south of Maple Creek.

The new property on the west side of town had been secured from the Townsite Trustees and here the Regina Exhibition was to have a permanent home. A certain number of buildings, stables and pens were constructed in record time to be ready but when the Exhibition opened on July 29, tents were very much more conspicuous than buildings.

. To the local people it was like a little World's Fair. Live-

stock came from as far west as Calgary and as far east as Eastern Ontario. Manitoba herds were especially numerous and stable accommodation was far short of the need. But the most serious deficiency was water. Local wells were totally inadequate and tanks to haul from distant springs had to be pressed into service.

Colour and pomp were not lacking. Distinguished guests wearing gold braid came from the East; equally colourful people wearing paint and feathers came from the reserves and farmers wearing whatever happened to be handy came from all directions. Lord Aberdeen as Governor General of Canada opened the fair and said the government money given for its support would prove to be a good investment. Before he left, he made a personal investment and brought an Ayshire bull for his farm in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia.

Every day had its features, judging and novelty attractions. There were seven bands, bagpipes, horse races that paid eighty dollars for first prize, walking races for teams hitched to wagons paying ten dollars for first, Red River Jig competitions, Musical Rides by the North West Mounted Police, Broncho-busting, Indian Polo, Trap shooting, Football, and tennis tournaments. And for the benefit of exhibitors and others who desired to buy or sell, an auction sale was arranged for the last two days.

In the livestock section were more breeds than one would encounter at a modern Western Exhibition. Suitability in breeds had not been well established and many of them were making a bid for favour. There were classes for eight breeds of pigs and the same number for sheep. For the sheep men, also, was a class for the Best Trained Collie dog, to "be tested with sheep".

The Territories had not seen Belgian horses at that time but the prize list provided for Clydesdales, Shires, Percherons, Standard Breds, Hackneys and Thoroughbreds. First prize for a mature stallion of one of the draft breeds was thirty-two dollars, generous enough at that time. In saddle horse classes, there was a stipulation that all horses winning prizes were to become the property of the North West Mounted Police at one hundred and twenty-five dollars each. The free-spending young Englishmen, Beckton Brothers from Cannington Manor, were the chief winners with Thoroughbreds.

James R. Wilson and Archie Wilson, each of whom served as President of Saskatoon Exhibition, were boys on their father's homestead at Hanley at that time and decided upon the daring venture of shipping cattle to the Territorial. It was the highlight of their youthful years and they estimated that between seven hundred and eight hundred cattle were quartered there. The Wilson boys won first prize of ten dollars for the best pair of yearling steers, first for best two-year old steer and first for pair of three-year-olds. In the heavier classes, Kobold and Company from Winnipeg were winners. The Kobolds were considered to be about the best feeders in Manitoba and usually featured heavy cattle of a ton or over. Some really big cattle were entered in the class calling for "Butcher Steers Three Years and Under Seven". Mature beef held no terror for the people of that period. A special prize of ten dollars was offered for the animal having the best hide for robe manufacture.

William Sharman of Souris, a conspicuous western pioneer with Herefords was the principal exhibitor of that breed. Aberdeen Angus exhibitors were J. D. McGregor of Brandon, Joseph Glen of Indian Head, Walter Clifford of Austin and others.

Poultry had forty-nine breed or variety classes, plus turkeys, geese, ducks and pigeons. There was enough butter to feed an army and Yorkton's new creamery won the highest awards. The Innisfail cheese factory had the biggest cheese, even if it did not win a championship. This cheese, weighing thirteen hundred pounds, was from one day's milk at the factory and was the biggest ever made in the West.

To recognize farmers who were proficient in both livestock and grain production, there was an unusual competition in which each entry consisted of two bushels of wheat, two bushels of oats, two bushels of barley, two bushels of peas, half a bushel of flax and one male and two females from each of cattle, sheep and pigs. But to make things even more difficult for the judges, there was an Agricultural Societies' class with a first prize of one hundred dollars, in which each entry consisted of:

- 5 draft horses.
- 5 general purpose horses.
- 4 pedigreed cattle, one to be a bull.
- 4 grade cattle.
- 4 ewes and one ram.
- 5 pigs.
- 2 bushels of Red Fife Wheat.
- 2 bushels of feed barley
- 2 bushels of black oats.
- 2 bushels of white oats.
- 2 bushels of two-rowed barley.
- 2 bushels of six-rowed barley.

Industrial exhibits and displays reminded visitors that the new West could produce more than agricultural products. There were coal from Lethbridge, lumber from British Columbia, building stone from Manitoba, furs from the North and gold washed from the gravel bars on the Saskatchewan. Determined to stimulate western industry, prizes were offered for innumerable articles made in the Territories or Manitoba, a few of them being top buggies, cutters, bob-sleighs, ax handles, farm gates, pumps, leather boots, mocassins, saddles, harness, buffalo coats, pottery, bricks, brooms, tents, furniture, row boats, eigars, soap, blankets, and straw hats.

Prairie fire being the bane of the settlers' existence, what could be more timely than new methods of combatting the cruel, unreasoning monster that rode on the wind and sometimes robbed the homesteader of all that he possessed. The Executive Committee of the North West Territories sought to exploit the inventiveness of the settlers by offering a very special prize of five hundred dollars for the best Prairie Fire Extinguisher, provisions being that it be drawn by not more than four horses, operated by not more than two men and at a cost not exceeding three dollars a day.

Nothing in new machinery attracted more attention than two De Laval cream separators on display by Frank Wilson of Montreal. They foretold the day when a lot of creamer cans would be replaced and used to carry swill to the pigs.

A widely publicized Essay Contest had its place at the Territorial. Twenty dollars was the first prize and the finished articles, not exceeding twelve hundred words, were to be sent

to Lieutenant Governor Mackintosh not later than July 20. Titles upon which contestants could write are not unfamiliar to present day students of agriculture:

"Irrigation as Applicable to Certain Districts in the Territories".

"How Best to Destroy the Gopher Pest".

"Dairy Products and Cheese Making".

"Hog Raising and Ham and Bacon Curing".

"How to Make the Farm Pay".

The North-West as a Home for the Immigrant".

Regina had no grandstand but as the day to day programme made clear, there was no lack of entertainment. The attraction that won the greatest praise however, consisted of a musical pageant sponsored by Knox Church, and called Carnival of Nations. Sixty girls representing fifteen nations took part and gave four showings a day under canvas. One may judge that to youthful James Grassick, the chief attraction of the Exhibition was his job of transporting all the young ladies to and from the grounds in his big, new, two-horse van that would seat twenty at a trip.

The Territorial passed. Robert Sinton said it set a new pattern for Exhibitions in the West, but it left Regina so exhausted that it did not hold another fair until July, 1899. In the meantime there was complete reorganization, at a special meeting on June 25, 1898, with Mayor F. N. Darke occupying the chair. The new body was the Regina Agricultural Association. G. Spring-Rice was elected President and Wm. Trant, Secretary. The Secretary's salary worried the directors and some favored placing him on a commission basis, giving him twenty percent of the one dollar memberships he collected. But after much debate and all the amendments were defeated, Secretary Darke's salary was fixed at one hundred dollars per year.

It was like starting all over again when His Honour, Lieutenant Governor Forget with the help of Madam Forget, opened the fair. Folk called it the Weed Fair. Farmers had become intensely weed conscious; they were worried by the increase in noxious weeds and the main centre of interest at the fair was the extensive display presented by the Department

of Agriculture, under the direction of Mr. Willing, Territorial Weed Inspector. The Farmer's Advocate said it was regrettable that so many kinds of weeds could be obtained in the locality and unless Regina farmers adopted better methods, the district will "soon be a strong rival of Red River Valley". It was an unhappy thought that the old Valley of the Red had gone to weeds, but fortunately the statement echoed more of fear than fact.

Farmers saw new machinery at that fair, notably a disc drill that promised to be much more satisfactory on the Regina clay than the old hoe-type of drill. Angus McKay judged the grains and the winning samples were given to the Board of Trade for distribution to immigration offices overseas. There was some broncho-busting, a ploughing match and R. and J. Kinnon's Clydesdale stallion won the draft horse championship. Prize money paid out was five hundred and ninety-four dollars plus one hundred and seven dollars for races.

The Association had a membership of about two hundred and seventy-five and on the strength of that, collected grants of two hundred and forty-nine dollars from the Dominion Government and one hundred and forty-eight dollars from the Territorial Government in 1899. The assistance was small enough, especially after the generous aid that came with the Territorial. But responsibility was broadening. Special lectures were being arranged. Angus McKay was invited to come from Indian Head and Dr. Fletcher from the Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa to talk "Weeds", the subject that would fill any Regina assembly hall at any time. The Association had no reservations about giving advice to Governments and advised the Territorial Government to institute stallion inspection and urged that there be better regulation of outfits doing custom threshing.

From the beginning, the place of grains and livestock was unquestioned but beginning with the fair of 1900, horticultural classes were given a better place and those who had been slow to see the advantages, were obligd to admit that the flower exhibits were a revelation and long overdue. Even on the frontier, a fair should not overlook the flowers and the artistic displays and the music. For its 1900 music, the Board procured the Stoney Beach Brass Band with twelve instruments,

and promised to pay thirty dollars for travelling expenses and all.

The need for new buildings was growing and it was decided to borrow six hundred dollars on the personal guarantee of Mutch Brothers of Lumsden. A couple of years later (1903) the city agreed to give three hundred dollars for stables and to further help the building fund, it was decided to make a charge for admission of vehicles as well as occupants entering the grounds. The new tariff was fifteen cents for one-horse rigs and twenty-five cents for a vehicle drawn by two horses. But if a vehicle carried an exhibit, admission charge was waived. This placed a bonus on entries and pies showed the biggest increase. Some of the pies that were exhibits at the gate, however, were part of the family lunch at noon.

The fair was now expanding rapidly. Directors talked about holding another "Territorial". In 1905 the appropriate committee was authorized to arrange for special entertainment attractions at a cost that might go as high as two hundred and fifty dollars. It was a lot of money, of course it was, but it might be a good investment. Evidently it was a profitable year because in December, when the association was having secretarial troubles, the secretary's annual stipend was raised from one hundred dollars to one hundred and fifty dollars and a committee was named to buy that officer a Christmas present.

They reorganized again, this time to accommodate themselves to a bigger enterprise. On April 3, 1907, the Legislature of the new province passed "An Act to Incorporate the Regina Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition Association Limited". The reorganization placed Regina in a better position to secure the Dominion Exhibition which was finally awarded to that city for the year 1911. With gaze fixed upon the Dominion-supported fair, the Regina Board began two years in advance to improve its grounds. The grandstand was rebuilt to seat four thousand people and new racing stables were erected to accommodate one hundred horses. That did not mean that Regina directors squandered money. On the contrary, it is written into the minutes (of meeting May 29, 1909) that.

"After due consideration and in view of the fact that on 27 to 30th of July the moon is at its best, it was



moved by A. T. Hunter, seconded by H. F. Mytton, that the contract for fire works be not entered into this season,—carried."

Their reasoning was all right; there is no point in shooting costly, moon-coloured fireworks to try and outshine a full moon and besides, a full moon is usually an inspiration in itself, especially to people under the age of ninety.

Early in 1909, Regina appointed officers for the Dominion Exhibition, J. F. Bole for President, H. F. Mytton for Vice President and L. T. McDonald for Secretary. With the aid of the big grant from the Federal Government, seventy thousand dollars was spent on improvements of the grounds. E. L. Richardson was invited to come from Calgary to advise on preparations and Regina was determined to repeat the successes that came with the Territorial.

In the sixteen years that followed the Territorial, the city and country had witnessed undreamed development. Regina had grown rapidly; immigration had accelerated; automobiles ceased to be curiosities; the quality of livestock exhibited had improved greatly and the inauguration of Regina's Municipal Street Car System coincided with the opening of the Dominion Exhibition. Visitors to the show could be carried in comfort and style but some used their spending money to ride back and forth on the five cars in service on the Exhibition Line, instead of using it on the Merry-Go-Round.

Many animals whose names will live long in breed history appeared at the Regina Exhibition that year. There were Leroy 3rd of Meadowbrook, Champion Aberdeen Angus bull for J. D. McGregor and afterwards champion at the International at Chicago; Bijou, Champion Percheron stallion for W. E. and R. C. Upper of North Portal; Rose Allan, champion Clydesdale mare for W. C. Sutherland; Trojan, champion Clydesdale stallion for P. M. Bredt and Son; Dale's Gift 2nd, champion Shorthorn female for Carpenter and Ross of Ohio; Refiner, champion Hereford bull for L. O. Clifford of Ontario, and Mercena Vale, champion Holstein bull for Colony Farm of British Columbia.

To win the Clydesdale championship, Bredt's big horse Trojan, had to be placed ahead of Lord Ardwell, the champion of all breeds at Winnipeg and Brandon, and also over Taber's popular horse, The Bruce, champion at Winnipeg the year before. No judge of horses could be considered a good insurance risk in those years but in this particular case, the judge's position was more precarious than ever. The babble about the horse ring, much of it in broad Scottish accent, was said to make the Machinery section seem quiet.

Belgian horses made a bid for favour that year. If the breed had a stronghold in the West, it was Regina where two of the biggest importers, E. Pootmans and Sons, and A. Haazen, were located.

The biggest excitement in the beef cattle department was in two inter-breed classes, one calling for five head, either sex, any breed and owned by one exhibitor. It was a battle royal and the Shorthorns owned by Carpenter and Ross of Ohio were first; the Shorthorns belonging to Sir William Van Home were second; J. D. McGregor's Aberdeen Angus were third; P. M. Bredt's Shorthorns were fourth; the Harding Shorthorns from Wisconsin were fifth; James Bowman's Aberdeen Angus from Guelph were sixth and L. O. Clifford of Oshawa was sixth with his Herefords. Then came the class for ten head of beef cattle, any breed, in which two breeders could combine to make an entry and the McGregor and Van Horne combination was placed first over the noted herd from Ohio.

Early in 1913, Regina Exhibition employed Dan T. Elderkin to be manager and thus was formed an association that continued for twenty-nine years. His coming meant a lot as he was a technical agriculturist with experience in exhibition work. As a boy he had attended the fairs with his father's livestock and when the Canadian exhibit was sent to the World's Fair at Buffalo in 1901, Dan Elderkin went along as a seasoned herdsman. After graduating from Ontario Agricultural College in 1903, he was associated with the Ontario fairs and managed the fair at Ottawa for a time.

Dan Elderkin saw Regina Exhibition through good times and bad. Just after his appointment, a disastrous fire (June 11, 1913) starting from a caterer's gasoline stove, destroyed the grandstand and spread to the Industrial and Agricultural Building. It was a sixty thousand dollar blaze but rebuilding began at once and the new stand was ready for the Exhibition.

Of the Clydesdale horse show at Regina that year, one farm



paper said, "it is doubtful if a greater display of quality individuals ever appeared before a judge in Canada". It was a horsey period in Canadian history and two thousand and six stallions, over half of which were Clydesdales, were enrolled in Saskatchewan alone. With fourteen entries led out to contest the aged stallion class that year, the judge took more than an hour to select his winners, The Bruce for first, Gartly Bonus for second and Prince Robert for third.

While the horsemen were making history, the machinery companies were doing the same. Regina, surrounded by good and fertile soil, was becoming Western Canada's most important distribution point for farm machinery. Farmers knew that they would see the newest and the best in tractors and equipment at the Exhibition. In that year of 1913, they saw new automatic stookers that proved of interest but never became popular; they saw better sheaf loaders and they saw new things in agricultural machines, cultivators, one-ways and rod-weeders.

The exhibition carried on with its programme during the years of the first Great War, as it did during the second, but in both periods the plant was used for military purposes. Some of the best work was done during war years. Regina was proud of its 1915 record, of its first Farm Boys' Camp that year and the bonanza Homemakers' Competitions. In the latter, each of fifteen clubs was represented with a competitive booth displaying cookery, needlework, art, horticulture and dairy products. The Percy club from near Kisbey was winner and the Regina club was second but all the club displays told something about the artistic instincts and ingenuity of Saskatchewan women. And the contest for home-made bread was something never equalled, before or since. With a first prize of fifty dollars, about three hundred entries were forward. It was a good feature and it was repeated.

Regina's grandstand burned again, this time on Wednesday of Exhibition week, 1917. The stand was crowded with people when the fire started but cool heads took command and the burning stand was evacuated without serious mishap. The travelling performers began to pack up. They supposed there would be no more grandstand show during the week, but Dan Elderkin said, "Boys don't go away; we'll have another grand-

stand tomorrow and we'll want the show for tomorrow night". By noon on Thursday, a new stand was completed and waiting for visitors who sat on it and enjoyed a grandstand show that night. It was in line with western resourcefulness and western spirit.

All the Western Exhibitions had Horse Pulling Contests in 1924 but the most exciting chapter in the story was the intercity rivalry that developed between Regina and Saskatoon with the finals at Regina. In the scheduled contest, the Gibbs Brothers' team of Belgians, weighing thirty-seven hundred and ninety pounds, pulled thirty-one hundred pounds on the dynomometer, for the regulation twenty-seven and one-half feet, to make a world record. The Exhibition management immediately posted a prize of one thousand dollars for a special contest between the Gibbs team and the R. B. McLeod team of Percherons that had made a record of twenty-nine hundred pounds at Saskatoon the previous week. The challenge reached Saskatoon and the McLeod team was expressed Regina that night. At contest hour the next day, the Regina grandstand was full and the spectators saw the Saskatoon team win the final on a thirty-one hundred pound pull. But Regina continued to claim the world's record on the performance of the previous day.

But there would be another year and both teams were taken home to be trained. All the honour of two Exhibitions and two noble cities was at stake in 1925 when the same two teams came to the Regina championships. A Cambridge-Oxford sculling match could not have been more talked about. It was exactly what Dan Elderkin wanted and needed to fill his grandstand that year when attendance was falling. Both teams were in the best of form and both had lots of backers. The Saskatoon team weighing thirty-seven hundred and twenty pounds, pulled and set a new mark of thirty-two hundred pounds and the Gibbs team, now weighing thirty-nine hundred and thirtytwo pounds pulled thirty-three hundred pounds on the dynomometer to win the championship and a new record. Having won the contest, the Belgians pulled again and this time bettered their own record to thirty-three hundred and fifty pounds.

The Pulling Competitions were extremely popular for a time



but popularity declined rapidly and perhaps it was just as well since nothing of permanent good came of them.

Nothing put Regina on the global map as much as the World Grain Show held there in 1933. It was a tribute to the Regina Plains and the good crop country thereabout. And Regina entered into the spirit of the event and staged a show that in magnitude and importance, far surpassed anything attempted before. The Show had its own organization, but still it was welded with the Regina Exhibition and they were held simultaneously.

From the soil of forty countries came seeds and delegates and new ideas. It spoke of the kinship of agriculture; it was a reminder of the versatility and goodness of the earth; and it made conservation seem the responsibility of every loyal and moral citizen.

With the Grain Show was staged the first World Grain Conference, intensely international in character. At the opening ceremonies in the Armories at Exhibition Park, two thousand people were in attendance and Honourable Robert Weir, Federal Minister of Agriculture, presided. With him on the platform were Premiers, Senators, Governors and Ministers. It was an impressive occasion and formal greetings from many countries were delivered.

countries were delivered.

Plant Scientists from far flung parts of the world presented papers and shared technical and practical knowledge about husbandry, varieties and markets. The experts could agree on most points but not about markets at that time when the grim shadow of depression hung over the world. It took a good steer to command five cents a pound and a long pig to bring five and one-quarter cents at Winnipeg. Wheat was hovering near seventy-five cents a bushel at Fort William and quite a bit less at prairie points. Butter was fifteen cents a pound and good eggs twelve cents a dozen. On the prairies, drought had accompanied depression. The temperature at Regina the day the wheat championship was named was 101°F., and if there was anything hotter than the weather, it was the tone of debates between representatives of the grain trade and the wheat pools.

The Grain Show proper was housed in an enormous building erected on the Exhibition Grounds for the purpose. There was competition in fifty-six classes of grains, some of them

strange to Canadians. Chief interest however was in the class for fifty pounds of red spring wheat and great was the jubilation when the championship and thousand dollar prize went to Freland Wilford, a farmer from Stavely, Alberta. To win in this class containing two hundred and ninety-five entries, Wilford's Reward wheat had to place over samples shown by Herman Trelle and other former Wheat Kings. But Trelle who had won the International Championship for wheat on three former occasions, scored a victory in the class for ten bushels of hard, red spring wheat, in which there were one hundred and sixty-four entries.

Siam won in rice; United States took most of the corn prizes but Canadians made the most impressive record and the soil of the West, dry as it was, won admiration. It was exactly fifty years after the first meeting of the Council of the North West Territories in the new Territorial Capital of Regina.

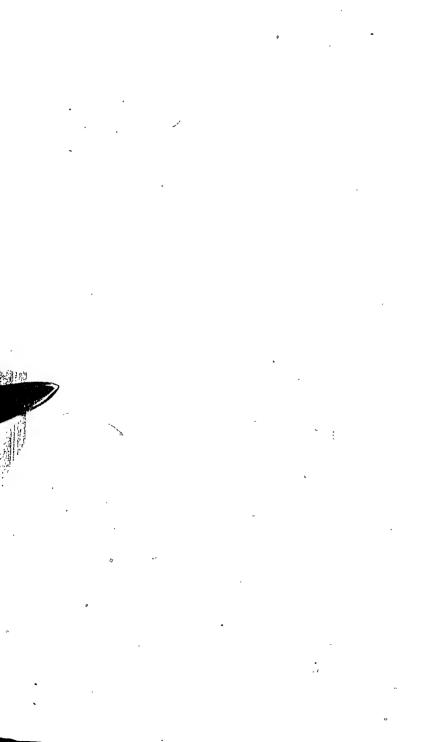
From the World Grain Show, Regina Exhibition inherited additional buildings and added prestige. But the years that followed were difficult, especially on the prairies. In December 1933, the Regina Exhibition's bank debt was one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. But there was no surrender and the annual programme was continued without a break although the financial position worsened. The City of Regina holding title to the plant, carried the burden of the debt, and ultimately wrote it off, allowing the Exhibition to benefit fully from the prosperity of the post war years.

Dan Elderkin's stewardship ended with his death in 1942 and pioneer James Grassick who went to Manitoba in 1878 and ox-carted to Regina in 1882, was manager until 1946 when Thomas McLeod with youth and red hair and a technical agricultural education in his favour, was appointed. With him the show continued its upward course.

At Regina's first fair the attendance was one hundred and fifty and at the Exhibition held sixty-five years later (1949), paid admissions were 130,852. And for its 1950 event, Regina dramatized one of the great revolutions in human history, the fifty-year transformation of the West, in industry, transportation, home furnishings, and agriculture. The farm machines of 1900 standing alongside those of 1950 held a story. And when that mid-century Exhibition was concluded Regina's



Exhibition officers made ready for the building of a new Livestock Pavilion furnishing stable space and a big sale ring, to cost three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. This time they would not ask a couple of local farmers to guarantee a loan at the bank.



## CHAPTER IX

## AN EXHIBITION MARRIES A STAMPEDE

"Nothing tends so much to stir up emulation among farmers and give impetus in improving methods in all departments as the competition resulting from entries at Provincial Exhibitions." Nor'-West Farmer, July, 1884.

CALGARY'S EXHIBITION AND STAMPEDE BECAME THE PRIDE OF the Chinook Belt and the admiration of all Canada. It tells a story of "rags to riches". What began as a mere tremor a year before the Canadian Pacific rails spanned the continent, became a mighty quake in the life of Calgary, with reverberations felt across the nation.

Just nine years before local people proposed a fair, a little troop of Mounted Police rode into the valley and selected a spot for a fort at the junction of Bow- and Elbow Rivers. Their inspector, with self-esteem becoming an Alexander the Great, called it Fort Brisbois, in honour of himself. Colonel Macleod had other ideas about names, however, and in February, 1876, the name Fort Calgary was made official. "Calgary", meaning clear, running water, was the name of Colonel Macleod's home on the Isle of Mull.

And less than a year before the talk about a fair, Calgary welcomed the first train from Winnipeg. It was a red-letter day, like that day in 1948 when Calgary Stampeders won the Grey Cup.

The Foothills attracted men whose gaze was in the direction of higher ranges, resourceful men, ambitious men. The weekly Calgary Herald of August 13, 1884 proposed an Agricultural Society and an Exhibition. Farmers, cowboys and townsfolk who met in the I. G. Baker Company store where they could

buy anything from peppermints to farm implements, said it was a good idea. And the bull whackers who conducted the freight north and south and the stage drivers whose passenger coaches left Calgary, bound for Fort Macleod, at 9 a.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays, agreed.

The Herald introduced the idea in these words:

"Now that the harvest season is near at hand, would it not be well if our farmers, cattlemen and merchants joined hands and exerted themselves in getting up an agricultural exhibition of the products of Alberta. Last year the specimens of the grains grown in this district were sent to Eastern cities and they compared most favorably with the cereals grown in the choice agricultural districts there. This year we should look upon it as our duty to do much more... We have suffered quite long enough from misrepresentation and erroneous ideas of our country, its climate and capabilities for production. No amount of writing or verbal testimony can convince as readily as the exhibition of our produce.... Nor in our opinion would it be wise to stint ourselves to the exhibition of agricultural produce alone.

After the exhibition here, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, we are convinced, could be induced to give easy rates for the transportation of a car load to the Toronto and other Ontario exhibitions.... Such steps would be a death stroke to the misrepresentation and do much to encourage immigration and the influx of capital. We trust those who take an interest in the future of our town and district will take immediate steps to form an agricultural society."

A meeting was held at Boynton Hall on August 16th. J. D. Geddes, member of the Council of the North West Territories, announced that a grant of \$200.00 might be obtained from the Council if an Agricultural Society were organized. J. G. Fitzgerald was on his feet immediately and moved, "That it is desirable to organize an Agricultural Society for this district". The motion was seconded just as quickly by Thomas S. Burns, and carried. The secretary had more good news; Mr. Swan had promised five dollars if a society was organized; Mr. Geddes would contribute twenty dollars and Messrs. Reilly and Murdoch, and Calgary Herald, ten dollars each.

If anybody had doubts about the wisdom of organizing, the promises of cash donations dispelled them. A committee was named to make preliminary arrangements about formal organization and it was announced that the next meeting would be held on August 22nd for "the purpose of enrolling members and electing directors as well as to consider . . . an exhibition, and sending samples to the different exhibitions in the east". Membership would cost one dollar.

Fifty names were received at the membership meeting, and Augustus Carney who homesteaded on land that became the Union Cemetery, was elected president, with J. L. Bowen as first vice-president, John Glenn as second vice-president, J. G. Fitzgerald as secretary, T. B. Braden as treasurer, and James Reilly, Charles Geddes, Leo Gaetz, Mr. Ring, George Murdoch, Mr. Robb, Sam Livingstone, James Votier and Joseph Butlin, directors.

The Society's first undertaking was to interview William Van Horne, requesting assistance in transporting an exhibit to the East. Success rewarded the effort and Van Horne promised free freight and "probably passes for two persons to accompany".

The Herald issues reporting organization of the Agricultural Society carried other items that the student of early Alberta would not wish to overlook. The I. G. Baker Company (August 27, 1884) was offering fifteen hundred ewes and lambs and "forty selected French Merino bucks". The paper boasted close to one thousand regular subscribers and added, "... we are hopeful of even a greater measure of success." And on the editorial page of the same issue is a pertinent treatment of the difficulty that woman experiences in removing her strange and multifarious articles of clothing, in a sleeping car berth. It sounded convincing.

"Her clothes are pinned on with all kinds of pins, from the safety pin to the darning needle, tied on with strings, hooked on with hooks and eyes, buckled on with buckles and put on in many ways only known to the fair sex."

Fortunately, fewer clothes and more zippers were to bring relief such as neither the editor nor the directors of the Calgary

Agricultural Society could possibly foresee at that time. And the next issue (September 3, 1884) notes quite casually the fate of the two local lads who had overrated their skill in horse stealing. The paper report was brief:

"Hanged. A report from Montana that Dutch Al who worked around town last winter and Buckley, the cowboy who played the bad western man, have both been treated to a hempen necktie for horse stealing in the neighbourhood of Mussel Shell River."

Happily their names did not appear on the list of Directors of the Calgary Agricultural Society.

The Society considered holding a fair in the fall of 1884 and, for the first year, a "Miscellaneous Exposition" was favored above a straight agricultural show. But it was found necessary to limit society activity to the preparation of an exhibit of agricultural produce to be sent east, and a pamphlet that would tell people elsewhere that "we do not live in a country of perennial frost and snow". John Glenn who was farming nearby wanted to tell the East that if real grains and vegetables could not be grown so far west, at least the "imitations were better than Ontario's originals".

It was estimated that 150,000 people visited the Calgary exhibit in the East, and the pamphlet in which the local Society had a capital investment of \$50.00, proved so popular that the government was asked to print 25,000 more copies. Secretary Fitzgerald accompanied the exhibit through the East and reported widespread interest. Some of the Ontario farmers who saw the seven-foot long straw from Alberta grain, insisted that it must be a fake and examined it to see where it had been spliced.

While no fair could be held that year, progress was made in securing a fair grounds. It seems that A. M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior at Ottawa was visiting south of Calgary. A horse he was riding threw him and the double result was a broken collar bone and a very dejected Deputy Minister. Major James Walker, formerly of the North West Mounted Police, came that way after the fashion of the Samaritan of old, rescued the injured man from Ottawa and took him home. When Colonel Walker hinted that the Dominion Government



should give the Calgary Agricultural Society a piece of land for a Fair Grounds, the helpless Deputy was in no position to discourage the idea.

A few days later, they inspected the land on which the Exhibition plant is located today and Burgess promised to use his influence in securing the property. The Calgary Agricultural Society finally bought ninety-four acres from the Government at \$2.50 an acre, subject to a guarantee that the land would not be subdivided into town lots.

Rebellion had a disturbing effect everywhere in 1885 and the Agricultural Society was satisfied to do no more than send another exhibit to the East. But the Society was reorganized (March 29, 1886) with Major James Walker as president, J. G. Fitzgerald continuing as secretary and past president Carney taking the post of treasurer. Major Walker was determined that there would be a fair in the autumn.

Dates chosen for the fair were October 19 and 20. Claxton's Star Rink was secured for the inside exhibits and the adjoining field for livestock and machinery. A \$900.00 premium list supported by a grant of \$200.00 from the Council of the North West Territories, and \$600.00 subscribed by local citizens and business firms, was offered. Prizes, by standards of that time were generous enough, \$12.00 first prize for mature bulls, and \$8.00 for second. For homemade cheese, "not less than twenty pounds", the prizes were \$6.00 and \$4.00. The directors overlooked the fact that the term Thoroughbred applies only to a breed of light horses and offered \$10.00 for the best "Thoroughbred Ram any age", with \$5.00 for second.

Weather was favorable except that a recent fall of snow melted and left mud everywhere, with the result that some of the entries could not be delivered. But the fair opened amid a whirl of activity. Judging began at 11 a.m. on the first day and at 4 p.m. when the judges had finished their labours, the hall was opened to an eager crowd. Vegetables surpassed anything seen by the people from Ontario, and the Edmonton district delivered its first humiliating barb by exhibiting the "biggest squash ever seen in these parts". It was almost as unkind as making Edmonton's Leduc and Red Water oil fields bigger than Calgary's Turner Valley. And to add to the mental

cruelty, Edmonton exhibitors showed tobacco grown in their district.

Major Walker and Leo Gaetz were the big winners in the grains and vegetables; Mrs. D. McDougall of Morley showed "a fine cinnamon bear skin"; the Police Band won the \$20.00 award in band competition and the President made a speech. Admittedly the outside exhibits were light and there were no sheep, but the horses were of good quality and the Massey Manufacturing Company won the award for the best collection of implements "suitable for Northwest" and also first prize for "display of wagons".

A feature competition was judged on the morning of the second day. It was the Baby Show. Up to that time, not many white babies had appeared but, in this contest, three were entered, all boy babies and all potential Prime Ministers. They were "Masters Cook, Paquette and a third who wishes to preserve his incognito for political reasons". Though only three in number, they created more problems for the judges than twenty-three Hereford bulls would have done.

The infants were paraded at the foot of the stage but the judges could not be located. When finally forced from their hiding places, they went to work while the band played "Peekaboo". What happened from there forward is best told by the Calgary Herald (October 23, 1886).

"After some futile attempts at ascertaining the weight and age of the exhibits, the judges withdrew to the back of the stage, out of pistol shot (range) and came to the conclusion that the only way to avoid bloodshed was to award a first prize to each competitor. Sending Mr. Creighton to the front with his pusilanimous decision, they then hurriedly retired by the stage door. In view of this remarkable judgement, we anticipate a very large entry in this class next year".

The fair ended at four o'clock on the second day because the Liberal Association had booked the building for an evening meeting. Cutting in upon the fair's time may have been an error explaining in part why the party has had many reverses in Calgary since that time. Anyway, Calgary's first fair was over. The total attendance was five hundred. Everybody was satisfied and the directors were encouraged.



Each successive year saw bigger agricultural exhibits. The vegetables and grains were especially good. During the nineties, the cattle shown were mostly Shorthorns and the horses were mainly Clydesdales. The recognized sensation at that time was the Clydesdale stallion Balgreggan Hero, imported. In 1891, '92 and '93, he was undefeated at Winnipeg, for R. and J. A. Turner of Calgary and he was selected to go with the Canadian exhibit to the World's Fair at Chicago. He was an attraction at any fair and the people of the Foothills country came great distances to cast eyes upon the heavy draft wonder whose blood was assured for posterity.

The young Agricultural Society had its share of reverses, the most common being financial. The grounds had been purchased from the Canadian Government in 1889. The cost was only \$235.00 but a few years later when money was needed, cunning work on someone's part led to a mortgage of \$3,000.00 against the property. After another three years, a new mortgage of \$4,000.00 was raised to retire the first one and the Nor--West Farmer of August 1896, reported briefly, sadly and solemnly, "Calgary Agricultural Society's grounds will be sold under mortgage on August 17th".

There was no fair for a few years but it was resumed in 1899, even though there remained some doubt about title and ownership. The country was emerging from depression and farmers and fairs had felt it greatly. But when the fair returned to become an annual event, Calgary was beginning to consider itself as the "Bright Pearl of the Territories". The reckless spirit of the cattle country was being transmitted to the fair; there was a horse race with fifty mounted riders in a single heat. The contestants were mainly Indians but it was a race such as had not been seen, with no "jockeying", and no "pulling" of horses. It was a race all the way.

The Exhibition property changed ownership in February, 1901, and on March 11th following, it was bought by the City of Calgary for \$7,000.00. The City now held the title but time and again through the years, the directors came forward with personal guarantees in order to obtain bank loans necessary for continuation of operations:

There was one year (1902) in which rains were so heavy that it was necessary to postpone the Exhibition from early

July until autumn. Deficit that year was \$800.00 and this brought so much criticism at the annual meeting that the directors refused to stand for re-election. But before irreparable harm was done, a shareholder pointed out that improvements and buildings added during the year represented \$2600.00 and therefore the Board should show a gain of \$1800.00 instead of a loss of \$800.00. Being men who knew more about branding steers than analyzing a financial statement, the shareholders had not thought about it that way. Now, everything appeared changed and criticism gave place to congratulations. The directors agreed to stand for election and all were returned.

The Society had been reorganized in March, 1900, and took the long-distance name, "Inter-Western Pacific Exposition". The next change came at the annual meeting in November 1910, the new name being the Calgary Industrial Exhibition Company, Limited. And finally, on December 11, 1933, it changed again, this time to Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Limited.

For years the names of Calgary Exhibition and "Ernie" L. Richardson seemed synonymous. Young Richardson had attended the Ontario Agricultural College in 1895 and '96 and qualified for the Associate Diploma. In the next two years he managed a dairy plant at Myrtle, Ontario and then went to Winnipeg to do bookkeeping. In 1903 he became Assistant Manager of the Calgary Exhibition and Assistant Secretary of the Board of Trade. Thereafter, "Ernie" Richardson was a big part of Calgary and in taking over complete management of the Exhibition in 1907, he brought experience, a knowledge of agriculture and a determination to make the exhibitors feel that they were partners with the Exhibition.

Calgary had the Dominion Exhibition in 1908, and with grants of \$50,000.00 from the Federal Government, \$35,000.00 from the Province and \$25,000.00 from the City, many improvements were made and \$34,000.00 were offered in prizes.\* The opening pageant told a story about the country, in terms of Indians, missionaries, traders, Mounted Police, cowboys and homesteaders. It was the beginning of the colos-



<sup>\*</sup>The first Dominion Exhibition was at Toronto in 1903, the second at Winnipeg, the third at New Westminster; fourth at Halifax, fifth at Sherbrooke and sixth at Calgary.



The Fabulous Chuck Wagon Race.



Entrance to Grounds at Calgary, 1950, a replica of old Fort Calgary. Chief David Crowchild of Sarcee Indians and a member of the R.C.M.P. stand beside Mrs. Magnus Begg and Mrs. Alex Mathison, daughters of Rev. John McDougall who knew Calgary from the year of its inception. (Photo by Harry Befus, Staff Photographer, Calgary Herald)



They Made Sid Johns an Honorary Chief at his Last Show.





Six Horse Teams at Saskatoon.

sal Monday Morning Parade, now a part of the annual Exhibition and Stampede.

Livestock classes were good, especially the Clydesdales and Shorthorns. The Herefords had not ascended to undisputed leadership on the ranges and the Hereford show consisted of one bull from British Columbia and the Manitoba herd of J. A. Chapman. No Alberta Herefords were shown. The leading feature among exhibits was the District Display, a contest that Calgary had adopted following its success at New Westminster. The thirty-seven young and ambitious districts competing for recognition gave point to E. L. Richardson's call to the people; "If you can't see all of Alberta, see Calgary Exhibition".

Many of the District Displays were convincing. The sign over the Lethbridge exhibit said:

"Lethbridge mines its own coal, makes its own flour, produces its own honey, grows its own fruit and vegetables, kills its own meat of all kinds, manufactures its own cloth, and is more self-sustaining than any other district in the province."

But Lethbridge did not win in spite of boasting. The winners in order of awards were, Granum, Okotoks, Carstairs, Macleod, Red Deer, Cardston and Prince Albert. Western Canadians attending the fair became better acquainted with Western Canada.

Calgary's claim to absolute supremacy in Hereford cattle competition, was established after 1912. The most exciting development, in the course of which Calgary adopted the Hereford breed, and the Hereford adopted Calgary, occurred after the first World War. At the Calgary Exhibition of 1906, no Herefords were shown and at the Dominion Exhibition held there in 1908, the only specimens shown were from British Columbia and Manitoba. When William Shields' fourteen-year old bull, Happy Christmas, with long face and upturned horns made a sweep of prairie Exhibition championships in 1910, there was nothing in Alberta that offered serious challenge.

Some of the best bulls of the breed were brought to Alberta in 1917 and when Calgary Exhibition opened that year the Hereford competition was one for the books on breed history. Favored to win the bull championship was either George

Fuller's \$17,000.00 Martin Fairfax or Frank Collicutt's \$11,900.00, Gay Lad 40th. Instead, the championship went to Beau Perfection 48th, a recent arrival owned by the Curtis Cattle Company. Next year at Calgary, the \$20,000.00 Gay Lad 16th won the championship for Collicutt, and Beau Perfection 48th-was reserve. It was competition at an International level.

For a time the City of Calgary made an annual grant to the Exhibition but in 1919, after several successful shows, the board proposed financial independence. The Exhibition Company continued to lease the grounds from the city, having complete charge of the premises, collecting rent, and spending at least the amount of rentals in upkeep of buildings and improvements. Actually it spent much more, as new buildings and more grandstand space were required. And in 1950, a Coliseum to seat 7,000 was being constructed at a cost of about \$1,300, 000.00, to be paid out of revenue.

A Marriage Ceremony took place in 1923 when Exhibition and Stampede were united. It proved to be a profitable union and the combined enterprise went on to bigger shows. It was not the first stampede at Calgary. There had been local rodeos from time to time and one big event, the stampede of 1912, managed by Guy Weadick and backed by the "Big Four" cattlemen, George Lane, Pat Burns, A. E. Cross and A. J. McLean. The backers wanted to perpetuate the skills and traditions and glamour of the unequalled range in that area which in the words of John Innis, is bounded "on the west by the Rocky Mountains, on the south by the International Boundary, on the north by the climate and on the east by circumstances". It was a notable show. It attracted the best cowboys on the continent and although operated independently of the

Exhibition, it set a pattern to be followed.

After the Union in 1923, producer Guy Weadick continued to direct the cowboy contests for a number of years. Critics said Stampede would dominate the agricultural part of the show and in some respects it did. But it was intensely Western Canadian and it was proved that the lure of the Rodeo programme brought many people to the grounds where the products and tools of agriculture were to be seen.

The Stampede that became an annual feature of Calgary's



midsummer show was a north American leader and brought more varieties of thrills and visitors than can be recounted here. In one particular event, Calgary was different from others offering rodes entertainment. In some of the small and early rodes at Calgary, chuck wagons from the Cross Ranch and Burns Ranch served flap-jacks in front of the grandstand, and retired by racing back to the barns. That suggested something, and in 1923, Calgary initiated the now famous Rangeland Derby, the Chuck Wagon Race. It was a certain guarantee that the cook's wagon of the years of open range, would be immortalized. And while others copied it, no other organization was successful in making the Chuck Wagon race such an outstanding feature.

In the first years of the Chuck Wagon competitions, there were not many rules but the competing wagons began, as they do today, from a standing start. They cut the figure "8", circled the half-mile track at their fastest speed, pulled up in centrefield, unhitched the four-horse teams, pitched the canvas, set up, the stove with at least two lengths of stove-pipe and started a fire. The first to produce smoke from the chimney flue, was the winner. Prizes were \$15.00 for first, \$10.00 for second and \$5.00 for third and Dan Riley of High River was the winner in that first year.

At the sound of the starting horn in a modern race, stoves, tent poles and flaps are thrown into the four wagons that compete in each heat, as the teams and outriders strike into the figure "8" and hit the track on the run for the half mile dash. Time varies from one minute, ten seconds, to one minute and fifteen seconds. The record made by Tom Lauder in 1940, was 1:09 3/5.

The race has grown in popularity and fame. In 1949, there were thirty-six wagons racing for prize money of \$7,500.00. The twenty thousand fans who witness the race each night, know that anything can happen; harness can break; horses can fall; wagons can collide or roll over. Sometimes, everything happens. For dust, daring and danger, no outdoor entertainment can compare with it, at least that is the sentiment of all who have the West in their blood.

Calgary saw Dick Cosgrave win the Chuck Wagons and thus the World Championship, in each of ten years. Then Cosgrave

took over the post of Stampede Arena Director, from which Jack Dillon had retired after years of service.

The Stampede Paddock at Calgary has been the stage upon which the world's best cowboys have performed. One cannot sit in the stands without thinking of Canadian champions and heroes of other years; "Nigger" John Ware of pre-stampede times, Tom Three Persons from Macleod who distinguished himself by winning the brocho riding championship against the best North American riders at the Calgary Stampede in 1912; Pete Le Grande of Pincher Creek; Leo Ferris who wouldn't give up just because a steer's horn had punctured his eye; Herman Linder of Cardston, Ray Knight who organized the first rodeo in Canada, at Raymond, in 1903; and that greatest of all riders, Pete Knight of Crossfield who won the world title for broncho riding five times and was killed beneath the feet of a bad horse in California. These were sons of Canadian soil who demonstrated what native fibre can be like.

Calgary could claim many "firsts" and "biggests" and "bests" in the Exhibition World. The Monday Morning Street Parade is a combination of Short Course in Western History, Outdoor Vaudeville and Alberta Pep Rally. There is nothing like it and sixty thousand spectators stand on painfully tired feet for hours to see it all. The Friday Morning Livestock Review for twenty thousand or more boisterous and cheering youngsters is a sight to stir the frostiest heart. And the Indian displays at Calgary can present more colours than a drugstore word wardrobe. When stockmen, farmers, cowboys and business men are making final preparations for their co-operative fair, Blackfoot Indians from Gleichen, Stonies from Morley, Bloods from south and Sarcees from nearby, are converging upon Calgary, to parade, to race and to study the strange antics of the white man.

Men of distinction were glad to visit the Exhibition and Stampede. Stars from Hollywood, Governors General from Ottawa, sportsmen from Seattle, Legislators from Texas and Canadians from as far as Halifax, came to see. And why not? The quality of the livestock was high; the Foothills air and mountain scenery had a distinctiveness and nowhere did the bronchos possess more equine dynamite nor the steers more speed and power.

Perhaps no guest was taken to the hearts of Calgary people and their visitors as much as Lord Tweedsmuir when, as Governor General of Canada, he visited the big show in 1937. He studied the exhibits and was fascinated by the Stampede, Indians and the pioneers whom he called the "aristocrats of the country". When Charles Yule, as president of the Exhibition and Stampede, presented Tweedsmuir with a mounted buffalo head, the Governor's reply was, "I shall take this trophy home and someday my grandchildren will come to believe that I shot it myself".

Calgary was careful to preserve a fine spirit of respect for the pioneers. The Old Timers' Cabin on the grounds, as headquarters for the Southern Alberta Pioneers' and Old Timers' Association, during Exhibition week, has heard more funny stories about frontier years than any other structure in the world. Some of those stories became a trifle bloated with successive years but still it is unfortunate that the old logs in that cabin cannot talk.

The Range Men's Dinner is an exclusive affair in an area where exclusiveness is not normally accepted. It was started years ago by officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway and has been an annual event in conjunction with the Exhibition and Stampede. Who were invited? They were those who were

"ranch owners, foremen, cowpunchers, cooks and wranglers with an outfit working the range with a chuck wagon, previous to January 1st, 1900, and must have been twenty years of age at the time". (Calgary Herald, June 8, 1929).

One Old Timer responding to the invitation of 1929, reported that he had been neither owner, cook or wrangler, but he had been a cattle rustler. "Will that let me in?" he asked and the reply was, "Yes, there will be others like you there".

Indeed the Exhibition plant is a memorial to the Old Timers and citizens who were loyal and helpful. Major James Walker who was president when Calgary had its first fair, held a long distance record for service. For forty-four years he was associated with the Exhibition and A. E. Cross who was president in 1897 and '98, had a thirty-five year connection.

Manager Ernie Richardson's connection was one of thirty-

seven years and nobody did more than he to bring it fame. He understood people and was a master in the art of advertising. If he had his way, the "Calgary Bonfire" would be seen across the country. One of the literal Calgary bonfires was a house that Richardson had hauled to the racetrack infield to set afire during the fair of 1913, just to show the visitors how fast the new Calgary firefighting equipment could extinguish a blaze. He hung the name of Calgary Exhibition on every fence and every post that would take a tack. A weary photographer endeavouring to secure Calgary pictures, complained that every good view in and about Calgary was displaying an Exhibition sign or poster. Said he, in disgust, "That man Richardson should have been a paper-hanger".

Richardson was no paper hanger, but he hung the name of Calgary Exhibition and Stampede in distant parts where millions could see it. Under his management, Calgary, with a population of twenty-five thousand, had the Dominion Exhibition; under his management the Livestock Associations of the province got the habit of using the Exhibition facilities for sales and with him the Calgary show became a Canadian institution.

On the last night of the 1940 Exhibition, Ernie Richardson stood in the rain, said "good-bye" to the crowd on the grandstand, thanked the directors and helpers, said it was his last fair and congratulated the Board on the appointment of his successor. He went back to his office and enquired about final attendance figures. He was told, "244,849". He had hoped for a quarter of a million but he was reminded that it was 489 times as great as that of the first fair, fifty-four years before. Ernie Richardson went to live at the West Coast.

The new manager was J. Charles Yule and he took office October 1, 1940. He had been president from 1936 to 1940. He was a stockman, a breeder and an exhibitor. As a judge of Shorthorns he was known internationally, having worked in many rings in the United States and Canada. It was later, however, in 1948, that he was to jūdge the Shorthorns at Perth, Scotland and thereby bring honour to himself and the Canadian community of livestock breeders.

Under Charlie Yule's management the Calgary enterprise became bigger and mightier and richer until the plant of 1950,



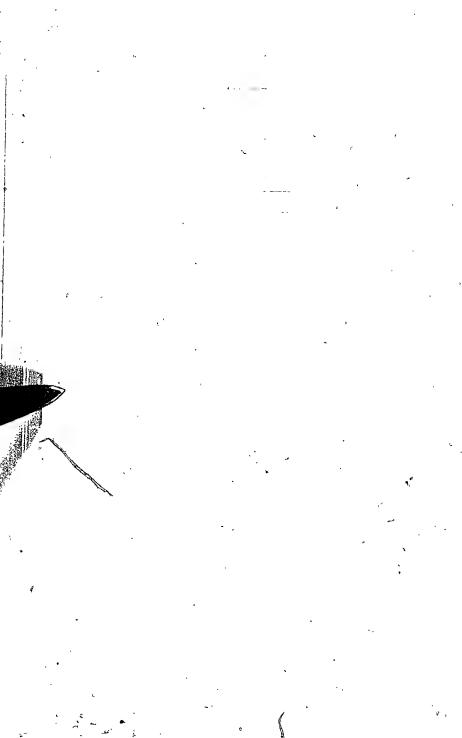
looked like five million dollars worth. Agricultural exhibitors were coming from farther afield and the prize money was bigger. The first prize list, in 1886, offered \$900.00; in 1950, the prizes offered in all departments, livestock, arts, stampede and races, totalled approximately \$100,000.00.

Attendance at the Calgary Fair in 1886 was just under five hundred. In 1913 it went over 100,000 for the first time and in 1949, when a special train loaded with Torontonians and headed by Mayor H. E. "Buck" McCallum, came to see and visit, the attendance was 408,000.

Said Calgary directors, "How long can this growth continue?".

Attendance was one sign of progress. There were many others. Beef cattle with the shortest legs, broadest backs and thickest flesh, graze to-day in that South-West where not so long ago, the bovine legs were longest, the backs narrowest and the fleshing thinnest. It represented a revolution in animal form, ordered very largely by the Exhibition and the Bull Sale.

Among the achievements were some intangibles that should be recognized. The Spirit of Calgary and the aura of the Foothills country, won the admiration of all Canada. It was the spirit of pride, confidence and optimism. What did more to develop that singular pride in Western institutions and loyalty to them than the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede?



## CHAPTER X

## HUB CITY ACHIEVEMENT

"The motto of the Saskatoon Industrial Exhibition is 'Excelsior'; the watchword, 'Progress'; the spirit, 'Optimism'. People of Saskatoon realize that the exhibition park is slowly but steadily being developed into a people's gigantic public school and playground worthy of a progressive people, a progressive province and progressive country."

David Douglas, in 1913.

IT WAS WITH THE AID OF AN EXHIBITION THAT SASKATOON was founded. The Ontario folk who conceived the idea of a temperance colony, adequately removed from John Barleycorn and all his sinful relations, applied to the Dominion Government for a tract of land and then advertised the plan at the Toronto Exhibition in 1881.

The tract comprising a couple of million acres obtained by the founders was on the South Saskatchewan River and the response to the idea of a booze-proof colony exceeded expectations. The Temperance Colonization Society was organized and in June of 1882, J. N. Lake, W. S. Hill and George W. Grant, left Toronto with a survey party to inspect the property. First they had to find it, but that was one reason for the surveyors.

The reports sent back were favorable. The soil was all right and the 150 miles between the chosen site and the nearest railroad at Moose Jaw represented a satisfactory margin of safety for those who sought assurane of isolation from all the foul odours of alcohol. Thus though conceived in the iniquitous and gin-soaked East, Saskatoon was born, amid the virgin purity of a remote spot on the prairies; or so abstemious leaders chose to believe.

A few settlers arrived in the fall of 1882, but the main body came over the trail from Moose Jaw in the following year. The Nor'-West Farmer of July, 1883, undertook to introduce the new community to the world:

"Saskatoon is the name of the metropolis of the Temperance Colonization Company. It is said to be one of the prettiest townsites in the North-West."

Everyone who had seen it, agreed that it was an attractive site, but monotonously difficult to reach. Only those with iron in their wills as well as in their blood, would venture that far from rails and relations. The Temperance Colony was being seeded with stock of a screened and selected kind.

In 1884, newcomers scarcely settled in their adopted surroundings, organized the Temperance Colony Pioneer Society. The new organization was many things but chiefly an agricultural society. James Hamilton was the first president, taking office following an organization meeting on March 1st. From the beginning, it was a vigorous society. It arranged about starting the first school, passed the hat around the colony and collected \$271.64 with which to pay teacher J. W. Powers.

From the constitution drawn up on March 15th, the reader will see evidence of enterprise:

"The objects of this society shall be the discussion of matters pertaining to the welfare of the settlers, useful counsel, the dissemination of useful knowledge, and social intercourse."

The constitution provided that "the Chaplain shall assist at the opening and closing of the meetings", and that

"any member who has been guilty of immoral conduct or violated the constitution . . . . . . may be expelled or fined."

Strange it must seem that moral irregularities would be considered a possibility among the members of a Saskatoon Exhibition organization. But times have changed and the directors of recent years have appeared so virtuous that all provision for disciplining has been removed from the constitution.

The Society worked for a ferry across the river, a co-operative store and a grist mill. It fixed the price of custom thresh-



ing at seven cents a bushel in 1885 and placed a ceiling of \$3.10 a hundred pounds on flour in 1886. It investigated the possibilities of removing some of the twists in the trail to Moose Jaw for the purpose of shortening it and it agitated for a Police Station.

Academic and cultural progress was not overlooked. On February 9, 1885, Thomas Copland was presenting a paper with the scholarly title, "Application of Theory to Practical Farming".

The Society may have slumped in 1886 but not for long. From the same roots there arose a new branch with a new name, the Central Saskatchewan Agricultural Society. Much as it must have irritated the founders of the colony, non-temperance as well as temperance members were admitted. Now, the Police Station was seen as a bigger need than ever. James P. Lake became president and Thomas Copland, secretary. Some of Copland's land afterwards became the campus of the University of Saskatchewan and in one of its reverend, halls there hangs, today, a portrait of the old man, holding an impressive scroll which, until the artist had done a "Houdini" transformation on it, was the handle of a curling broom.

The new executive announced a fair for the second Wednesday in October (1886). That first fair was held on the

The new executive announced a fair for the second Wednesday in October (1886). That first fair was held on the east side of the river, about where Nutana Collegiate stands today. There were no gates on the grounds, no grandstand and no sports other than races, but according to Joseph Caswell, every settler brought something to exhibit.

The prize list offered more of interest than monetary reward,

The prize list offered more of interest than monetary reward, but nobody exhibited to get rich. For the best herd of Durham cattle, the first prize was a dollar and a diploma; for the best in Ayrshires, the reward was the same. Joseph Caswell and his brother had brought some Shorthorn cattle (Durhams in the prize list) from Ontario that spring, driven the cows from Moose Jaw to Saskatoon, on foot, and then returned to the railroad to transport the new bull to Saskatoon by wagon. The bull was too fat to walk that distance with the cows. Anyway, the herd was ready for exhibition at the Fall Fair and the fat bull received as much admiration as Babe Ruth at a Youth Rally.

Attending the Golden Jubilee of the Saskatoon Exhibition

was Mrs. B. E. Anderson of Sutherland who recalled walking to Saskatoon and driving two cows, two heifers and a heifer calf for that first fair. Nancy, the calf, was stubborn and wanted to go home and when they arrived at the scene of the fair, both the little girl and the calf were tired. To make matters worse, it was learned that there was no class for Nancy. But there were other calves in similar position and sympathetic directors made a special class and Nancy won first prize and fifty cents.

In the class for oxen, there was bigger prize money; for a yoke of working oxen, the first prize was two dollars and the second, one dollar. H. Donavon offered a special prize of a dollar for the best trotting ox hitched to a buckboard. A trotting ox and a hefty buckboard represented the most dependable transportation, at least until the mosquitoes and warble flies tormented the critter to the point where he struck off to plunge into the nearest slough, taking buckboard and passengers with him. Mr. Kusch was the proud owner of the best trotting ox.

There is no evidence of inferiority among those who drove and exhibited oxen on the streets of Saskatoon at that first fair. Joseph Caswell who was a director and an exhibitor on that occasion and had the distinction of being an exhibitor in the livestock classes at Saskatoon Exhibition exactly fifty years later, told the writer that when the class for the "Best Walking Team" was called, Stanley King entered with his oxen. The horsemen protested. (They have accounted for most of the exhibition protests since that time). But the committee took a stand against racial discrimination, ruled that two oxen made a legitimate team, and King won the competition.

Robert Caswell, who later owned the internationally famous Shorthorn bull, Gainford Marquis, won a dollar for the best pen of fowl and H. Bowman had the winning trotting horse, an Indian pony, blind in one eye, but the fastest trotter seen around Saskatoon in those years. Racing purses at that show would never induce inflation on a national scale. First prize in the one-mile trot was one dollar, and first in the two-mile trot was two dollars. It appeared to be computed on the basis of a dollar a mile which would not entirely satisfy the Prairie Thoroughbred Breeders of the present generation.

In the wheat section there were three classes, one for Red Fife, one for White Russian and one for "any other variety". In each there were two prizes, two dollars and one dollar. Special prizes provided by public spirited citizens were intended to meet the special needs of the community, and had a distinctive character about them. W. H. Trounce, one of the directors, thought he understood something of the agony that went with bachelorhood, and here he is offering the tempting reward of one pound of the best tea for the "best loaf of bread, two pounds or over, made by any one keeping bach". Trounce was an advocate of big loaves. He would have no patience with a modern, one-pound loaf that practically disappears when a hungry man has taken a couple of meals from it.

Director Trounce was anxious that the settlers be clothed

Director Trounce was anxious that the settlers be clothed as well as full of two-pounder loaves, and a minute dated September 6, 1887, reads:

"Moved by Smith, seconded by Garrison that Mr. Trounce's offer of fifty cents for prize for best darned stockings and fifty cents for the best patched pants be accepted. Motion carried."

The next fair was on September 21, 1887 and the location was unchanged. The settlers had neither a University, an Experimental Farm nor a handy Department of Agriculture to which to turn for guidance and therefore a Fall Fair offered about the only experience in Adult Education. There was something bigger and better than the prize money about it.

And while nobody became rich from prizes, certainly nobody in the organization was embarrassed by big salaries. From minutes of a meeting held on Valentine Day, 1888, one reads:

"Moved by Copland, seconded by Garrison that six dollars be paid to the secretary for services rendered during 1887. Mr. ... objected to the principle but motion carried."

Saskatoon was still without a railroad but that did not stifle enterprise. In either 1888 or '89, the Caswells decided to exhibit their growing herd of Shorthorns at Prince Albert Fair as well as at Saskatoon. How would they take the cattle to that northern fair, over one hundred miles away? They would

drive them overland; there was no other way and there were advantages in exhibiting.

They added sheep to the prize list in 1889. In that year James Leslie, Saskatoon's first full-time school teacher, became secretary. Leslie was followed in the secretaryship by Thomas Copland in 1892, W. P. Bate in 1896 and C. L. Falkoner in 1897.

The rails came in 1890 and everybody wore a smile. To live in Saskatoon now was to be in the lap of luxury. The fair grew. In 1896 it was visited by Sir Wilfred Laurier who had some electioneering business in the West. Laurier had a special word of congratulations for Joseph Caswell for winning first prize in butter, special because Caswell was a bachelor. Caswell's comment was "needless to say I voted for him". But Caswell did more than that. He presented the distinguished statesman with a nine-pound Spanish radish that he had in his exhibit and later received a letter from the Canadian Prime Minister stating that it was the biggest and best radish he had ever seen. That should rate a firm Grit vote even from a congenital Tory.

After a few years on the Nutana side, the fair was moved across the river and the inside exhibits were displayed in the C.P.R. roundhouse. Then for a period after 1903 when the city bought the property, the fair was held on the site that is today City Park. By public subscription enough money was raised to build a temporary exhibit hall. Jimmie Flanagan, pioneer hotelman, headed the list of donors with a contribution of twenty-five dollars.

According to James R. Wilson, an early president, the fair board was not allowed to construct permanent buildings on the City Park land. Erecting temporary buildings and removing them each year was costly. After the fair of 1907, the directors needed an additional two thousand dollars with which to pay prizes and expenses. They appealed to the city council and obtained the aid. Next year the deficit was four thousand dollars and when an appeal was made to council, the aldermen showed some apprehension and enquired why this should be. Directors were ready with a well rehearsed answer, said it was largely because of the cost of constructing temporary buildings each year.



Council pondered the need for a permanent home for the growing Exhibition and submitted a money bylaw to permit spending thirty thousand dollars for suitable grounds and buildings. An option was taken on eighty acres of land on the south side, priced at ten thousand dollars and when the bylaw was aproved in December 1908, Manager Alexander McOwan announced to the world that a building programme would be undertaken at once. And in announcing the expanded show of that year, the manager took care to mention, or repeat, that:

"In arranging the details of this fair, the directors sacrifice none of the educational advantages of an agricultural and industrial exhibition, but they also provide that the function will be pleasure giving as well as profitable."

In 1911, there was reorganization. From the Saskatoon Fair, under the auspices of the Central Saskatchewan Agricultural Society, there emerged the Saskatoon Industrial Exhibition Association (articles of association registered December 13, 1911). Additional eighty acres of land were obtained. James R. Wilson was president and David Douglas, secretary-manager. In the following year (1912) C. D. Fisher left the post of Divisional Superintendent with the Canadian Northern Railway, at Saskatoon, to become Exhibition Manager. In the new position he served until his death, ten years later. Fisher was the unfailing optimist and the Saskatoon slogan "Bigger and Better Than Ever", was of his choosing.

The boom years carried the recently reorganized Exhibition to new heights. And what boom years they were, terminating as booms do always, in 1913. The four lots that James Clinskill bought at Spadina and Nineteenth Street for five hundred dollars, he sold in 1911 for \$47,500.00. It was a common occurrence. Near the end of those buoyant years, Saskatoon had one hundred and fifty Real Estate Agents, doing business and boosting the city. Sidney W. Johns who became the Exhibition's Manager following C. D. Fisher's death, was one of them. Everybody was rich or about to become rich; Sid. Johns said that unless a man had at least two one hundred

dollar bills in his possession, he would feel ashamed to open his wallet to the public gaze.

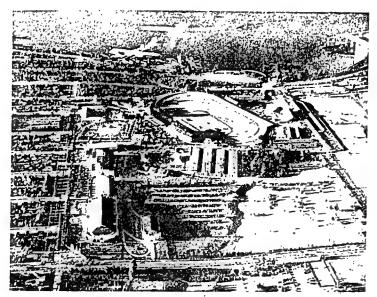
For the 1912 Exhibition, the first to be held by the new organization, they built a new grandstand, contracted with aviator Glen L. Martin to make flights daily for four days and when the directors met on July 10th, they discussed the advisability of trying "to stop the prize fight between Tommy Burns and Bill Richards, advertised to take place in Saskatoon on August 8." An ex-world champion boxer might make tough competition for the fair and besides, if the bout was held on another date, the directors and management might see it also.

Directors were to see a dream come true. The fair was bigger than anything Central Saskatchewan had seen. Livestock entries had jumped from 900 in 1911 to 2177 in 1912 and prize money paid for livestock had risen from \$3,672.00 to \$8,226.00.

The Saskatoon Horticultural Society was formed in this year and held the first flower show in a tent near the City Hall, just a week after the Exhibition. It was a historic event, just as the first Annual Fruit Show held in Saskatoon in August 1944, and sponsored by the Saskatchewan Horticultural Societies Association. Any show with such educational value had the full support of the Exhibition.

New buildings were needed more than ever, new barns, new racing stables, and new exhibit halls. Directors asked the city for fifty thousand dollars for the purpose but decision to build suffered one delay after another. When the Board met on July 26, 1913, just ten days before the opening of the Exhibition, it heard that livestock on the circuit and entered at Saskatoon, far exceeded stable accommodation. Some opined that it was too late to build but the majority, being men of action, authorized an immediate start on two new cattle barns, each 150 feet by 34 feet; one 76-foot extension to each of the sheep and swine stables, and thirty additional stalls for racing horses. And when the Exhibition opened on August 5th, the new stables were completed; every stall was bedded down and every stall occupied. It was in the spirit of Saskatoon's founders. And when Robert Caswell was authorized to organize the biggest livestock parade Saskatoon had seen, he was assured that the directors would turn out to help lead the





Exhibition Park, Vancouver.



Prof. George Raithby Judging a Notable Class of Holstein Cows at P.N.E., 1949.



Livestock Building at P.N.E.





The Hobby Show Building, P.N.E.

stock. It still happens occasionally but a lot of directors are out of practice when it comes to leading bulls these days.

The year 1914 brought fresh worries. War was declared on the day before Premier Walter Scott opened the Saskatoon Exhibition. The country was feeling the chill of depression, and weather during Exhibition Week played obstructionist. Some people advocated suspending the Exhibition until the war was over. But-President James R. Wilson took a strong stand and urged carrying on. Curtailment was accepted and while the year 1915 witnessed the biggest crop in the history of the country, it also saw a comparatively small fair.

Seven stables burned down on April 15, 1916 but they were rebuilt and the Exhibition began again to gain momentum. In 1917, a deputation headed by Russell Wilson was sent to Toronto Exhibition to scout for new ideas by which the local Exhibition could be made "Bigger and Better". The scouts returned weighed down with ideas, among them a strong and noisy conviction that Saskatoon had a better show of horses than Toronto. Mr. Wilson recommended that the machinery displays be enlarged and made more educational. Evidently the Rein-Drive Tractors that he saw at Toronto impressed him greatly. He prophesied that this means of tractor control would be adopted because western farmers would feel more at home with a pair of leather lines or reins, than with a steering wheel. It was not a good guess.

The idea of a Farm Boys' Camp was discussed at this time. Regina had introduced the camp in 1915 and Saskatoon had a small one at the Exhibition of 1918. The Farm Boys' Camp became a regular feature, the biggest camp being held in 1939 when 333 boys were registered.

In the first post-war year, the western exhibitions had auto races and heard Sousa's Band. John Phillip Sousa who said his idea of heaven was "a horse, a dog, a gun, a girl and some music on the side", made a bigger impression in Prairie Canada than any musician before or since.

Sid Johns was the new manager following C. D. Fisher's death on June 11, 1922. With Johns the Exhibition expanded; it brought out the best herds and flocks; it attracted more people; it built up serviceable grounds and it embarked upon

a broader programme of activities like Fat Stock Shows, Poultry Shows and Auction Sales.

Sid Johns knew the value of visual education. People are more impressed by what they see than by what they hear. Saskatoon's new manager brought the University of Saskatchewan, the Regina Exhibition, the Departments of Agriculture and his own board together to offer some unusually practical demonstrations at the 1923 Exhibitions. The Federal Department of Agriculture was asked to furnish a carload of market cattle to point up all the market types; the Provincial Department would furnish a herd of dairy cows, some good and some poor but all with known production records; the University agreed to make up a bacon pig display and provide two poultry flocks, one of the latter to be an average, unselected, farm flock, and the other to be a culled flock. Finally, they would dig a trench silo, twelve feet wide, eight feet deep and thirty feet long, on the fair grounds. It was a well balanced display bearing on practical farm problems and all sections of it were covered by qualified authorities ready to answer questions about types, breeds, feeding, management and markets. It worked well except that Saskatoon directors insisted that the hole in the ground did not need to be as big as specified in order to convey the trench silo principle. They were right.

Then came the age of Horse Pulling Competitions and Saskatoon was the western centre. The Neepawa Press, back in 1904 had suggested Horse Pulling Contests and added that if they became as popular as horse races, this country would soon produce the best and strongest horses in the world. With track horses, performance capacity could be measured and expressed easily enough, but not with draft horses. The world did not know how much a horse could pull until Professor E. V. Collins of Iowa State College built and patented the dynomometer in 1923. Professor A. E. Hardy of Saskatchewan was doing post graduate studies at Iowa State College at the time and when the Western Exhibitions became interested in Horse Pulling Contests, early in 1924, Professor Hardy agreed to make the machine. It promised to be an exciting season and Saskatoon's Board invited Henry Ford to officially open the Exhibition. Henry Ford could not come and Sid Johns said it was one of Ford's great misfortunes.



The Saskatchewan dynomometer that now reposes as a relic in the Western Development Museum at Saskatoon, was completed in time for the exhibitions of 1924 and Professor Hardy took it to Brandon, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Regina, and then added Vancouver and New Westminster.

The best pull of the season was made by J. D. Campbell's 3640-pound team at Vancouver, but the best all-around competitions developed at Saskatoon and Regina, where inter-city rivalry gave the contests a special fillip. Robert McLeod's Percheron team wearing Saskatoon colours was the best in 1924 but in a notable final at Regina in the next year, the big Belgians owned by Gibbs Brothers of Lumsden were the champions, much to the satisfaction of the Regina supporters.

champions, much to the satisfaction of the Regina supporters.

The year 1929 produced both good and bad for the Exhibition. In the spring, the Exhibition Board co-operating with the Board of Trade and other bodies, conducted the biggest Baby Beef Competitions for Boys and Girls that Canada has seen. Of the 1060 Hereford calves distributed in the previous fall, over one thousand were brought back for show and sale in the spring. It had represented a gigantic risk and many people said it would fail, but instead of failure, it was a big success and started a lot of young people and their parents in feeding cattle.

At the Exhibition, that year, there were encouraging features. Ethel Catherwood, native daughter and world champion high jumper, demonstrated her jumping as a special attraction and agriculture was to the fore as much as ever. But financial panic ruled and during the few years that followed, the exhibitions everywhere faced falling revenues and reduced grants. With some changes on its grounds and the moving of its barns to the east side, in 1930, Saskatoon had a deficit of \$31,000.00. Next year the loss was \$20,000.00. To add to the problems created by depression, the area to which Saskatoon was contiguous, was held in drought.

Would the Exhibition suspend operations? Sid Johns said "Never", and added that annual losses from the exhibition would be less than from an idle plant. Expenditures were cut and Johns proposed that the first cut of twenty percent would be in his salary. Said he, "Let's try a Free Fair". In 1932, Saskatoon hired no ticket takers for its outer gates. It was

Canada's first Free Fair. Still there was no profit but at least the attendance soared to 120,000 and on the year's operations. the fair's financial position was about \$12,000.00 better than in the previous year.

Just before the summer show that year, some practical joker concluded that at a Free Fair, the animals in the Exhibition Zoo deserved to be free also and smashed the locks on the bears' and the eagles' cages. Nobody worried much about the eagles and strangely enough they returned to their cages after a spell of freedom. But when it was known that the two cinnamon bears, Maggie and Jiggs, were on the prowl, city citizens felt some justifiable anxiety. Maggie proved a home-loving creature and crept back during early morning hours. But her old man derived so much enjoyment by disturbing and alarming the scores of unemployed who lived and slept along the river bank in those days, that he lost interest in the comforts of home, until captured. Sid Johns said the bears did the best job of the year in publicizing the Free Fair.

The Free Fair was repeated in 1933 when Saskatoon City was celebrating its Golden Jubilee. The World Grain Show at Regina robbed neighbouring exhibitions of some trade and crop conditions were poor again. A "Bennett Buggy" contest on the Travellers' Day Programme seemed as much in character as a Chuck Wagon Race at Calgary. And pasture was so scarce that Manager Sid John's invited city people to save their lawn clippings for the elk at Exhibition Park. The Exhibitions liabilities totalled \$140,000.00. It was an unhappy year in many waysa.

The main part of the debt traced to 1930 when the City sold \$93,500.00 in debentures on behalf of the Exhibition, \$35,000.00 of this being for the building of the stadium, \$33,500.00 for the new grandstand and \$25,000.00 for the moving and reconditioning of the barns. By agreement at that, time, the Exhibition Association assumed the entire liability as well as a direct bank loan of \$10,000.00 obtained in the same year. For a fair that was running an annual deficit, it was too much debt.

Drought and depression were brutal team-mates and everybody was feeling the pinch. The year 1937 was the driest in Western Canada's history and in Exhibition circles it was the

darkest. When Cora E. Hind who had just completed a world tour, opened the Exhibition, a lot of people said, "this will be the last". But Sid Johns and those associated with him believed that the Exhibition was needed more than ever. Instead of quitting, the Saskatoon Exhibition adjusted itself to its surroundings; stimulated judging ring interest; did what it could to foster art in view of the special advantages arising from local artists Gus. Kenderdine, Fred Steiger, Ernest Lindner; Dr. L. G. Saunders and others; encouraged more junior work; and instituted in 1939 the Provincial Sweepstakes Classes for Boys' and Girls' Dairy Calves. These were educational and progressive.

The years of the Second World War produced difficulties of other kinds. In October of 1939 the Exhibition management moved into office quarters in the Bessborough Hotel, leaving Exhibition Park to the Canadian Army. But the finest achievements spring from difficulties; the Exhibition had a wartime role to play and hands were set to it. The Annual Dressed Meat and Dressed Poultry Show was conceived amid the changes made necessary by war and so were the Friday Afternoon Farm Machinery Demonstrations and the Saturday Morning Shows for Boys and Girls.

. On the back cover of Saskatoon's prize list there appeared the Board's declaration, one that was in the spirit of all the war-time Exhibition effort:

"We are determined:

That the Saskatoon Industrial Exhibition, primarily an Agricultural Exposition, shall continue to direct its efforts to the promotion of the industry which Saskatchewan represents.

That through its facilities and exhibits it will continue to 'show the best the West produces' and thereby give concentration and encouragement to the part which our Province can play through its vital agri-cultural resources, in serving the needs of our Em-

pire in the present crisis.

That the exhibition will be operated as economically as is considered sound and feasible to the end that Canada's war effort shall not be impaired. That the Saskatoon Exhibition shall continue to merit the support of the public as a valuable and outstanding

contribution to the life of the Province and its citizens."

Why did Saskatoon lead in so many activities? One reason was Sid Johns, the Dean of Showmen, the Canadian who was elected President of the International Association of Fairs and Exhibitions, in 1938. After a colourful career and twenty-one years of managerial service to the Exhibition and to Saskatoon for which he had the truest affection, the great booster died on October 31, 1943. The "Spirit of the Show" at Saskatoon is a monument to him.

Post war years with good markets for agricultural produce, and the cautious and wise leadership of Manager S. N. MacEachern, reversed the Exhibition's financial position. Debts were liquidated and surpluses were directed to improvements, new buildings and reserves. The Exhibition could better fulfill its aims, to distribute new ideas that would result in better methods, better appliances, better animals and greater skills, and for one week each year to make Saskatoon Exhibition Grounds the noisiest quarter section in the Province.

The Exhibition helped to give character to the Hub City, and no city had more. Its founders from Ontario intended that it should be a dry city. It is still dry but not in the way the pioneer Methodists thought about it. In spite of drought, however, Saskatoon is the City Beautiful, with landscaped riverbanks, well groomed boulevards and plenty of trees. Though it be an island in a sea of waving grain, the setting of the Bessborough Hotel, once a city dump for cans, ashes and amputated branches, is one of the topmost beauty spots of Western Canada. And the spirit of which Johns never ceased to boast is still there. A visitor from abroad said about Saskatoon, as he discovered it in the winter season, "coldest weather and warmest hospitality I have ever known."

#### CHAPTER XI

### SHOW WINDOW OF THE PACIFIC

"There's Wine in the cup, Vancouver, And there's warmth in my heart for you, While I drink to your health, your youth and vour wealth. And the things that you yet will do."

Pauline Johnson.

A fair to me is something like Christmas. It is not only a day, it is an institution, redolent with memories. I like to see everything when I go to a fair and I like to have plenty of time."

Nellie L. McClung.

WHEN VICTORIA AND NEW WESTMINSTER HELD'THEIR FIRST fairs, there was no settlement whatever on that south shore of Burrard Inlet, where the city of Vancouver was to arise. In 1885 when Port Moody was the western terminus of the newly completed C.P.R., the Vancouver townsite was being laid out by railway engineers. The name suggested for the town was Van Horne, but the President of the C.P.R. favoured the name of the English explorer, Captain George Vancouver, who was <sup>7</sup> first to circumnavigate that Island which also bears his name:

In April, 1886, the new town was incorporated with a population of six hundred and in June, fire reduced it to ashes. But Vancouver rose again, a fresh and vigorous city with mushroom qualities of growth. On May 24, 1887, the first trans-Canada train reached the city over the new Canadian Pacific rails. In spite of youthfulness, the Vancouver of 1921 ranked fourth in population among the cities of Canada and twenty years later it was in third position.

Rapidity of growth was but one of Vancouver's many boasts. The growing city had no lack of tutorial talent, anxious to instruct the visitor about expanding manufactures, important fisheries, fabulous lumbering, shipping lanes that led to the Orient and everywhere, one of the best harbours in the world, a progressive Provincial University, a pleasant climate, mountain scenery, Stanley Park and a mighty Exhibition.

In comparison with many other British Columbia Fairs and Exhibitions, Vancouver is obviously young, but though youthful in years, it is mature in size and reputation. Vancouver's Pacific National is one of Canada's most imposing exhibitions, distinctly national in scope, and in attendance, second only to the Canadian National Exhibition at Toronto.

J. J. Miller who was the first president and served from 1908 to 1921, said that Vancouver people talked about a fair for many years before actually organizing to hold one. Finally, the Vancouver Exhibition Association was organized and incorporated in 1908. Hastings Park, flanked on three sides by native forests, was leased from the City, for a fair grounds. The Park later known as Exhibition Park, had a race track and grandstand. But other buildings were required and money had to be raised. Life memberships were sold to provide twenty thousand dollars and a city vote of fifty thousand dollars went toward the construction of the Womens' Building.

The new association was not ready for an Exhibition in 1908 or 1909, but in the former year, a Spring Horse Show was held. It went well enough, except for some much talked-about protests growing out of alleged collusion between manager and judge, over some show horses in which the manager was said to have something more than an academic interest.

It was announced that the first fair would be held August 15 to 20th, 1910. The committees had not acted hurriedly but they built well the foundations for a great Exhibition. The purposes of the Exhibition Programme as defined at that time were very similar to the objectives at the middle of the century:

"To promote and improve agriculture, to develop the resources of the country, to disseminate scientific and mechanical knowledge, to stimulate healthy rivalry for supremacy and excellence in the minds of the rising generation and to promote trade and commerce."



Sir Wilfred Laurier opened the exhibition on a bright and busy afternoon and the opening was followed in quick succession by the first trotting race. Racing was conducted under the auspices of the Hunt Club and there was no betting. There and then, Sir Wilfred who possessed a special fondness for opening fairs, was created a Life Member of the Vancouver Exhibition Association and decorated with his membership button.

Improvements about the grounds were not overly conspicuous. When somebody enquired about the location of a certain display building, he received a stock answer that "it is still in the Architect's office." Hastings Park had a lot of big trees but they served a purpose and a Holstein bull or Clydesdale stallion that was well tied to a Douglas fir, had little chance of escaping. But as Sir Wilfred walked among the trees and studied the exhibits he prophesied that "Vancouver Exhibition will someday be second only to Toronto's."

Reports revealed that exhibits were good in nearly everything except British Columbia fruit and that Calgary and Edmonton had better displays of British Columbia apples than could be seen at Vancouver. But it is often thus. One will sometimes buy a better orange in Regina than in California and there have been times when Winnipeg gold-eyes were more readily available in New York City than in Winnipeg. But in the years that followed, the displays at Vancouver told an inspiring story about quality fruits, climatic advantages and the most modern merchandising.

Attendance at that first exhibition was sixty-eight thousand and when the books were closed for the year there was the encouraging surplus of eight thousand, eight hundred dollars. Said President Miller,

"If this can be done among the forest trees and ankle deep in dust and loose earth, what can be done on a properly completed Exhibition Grounds?"

Some prairie people will be surprised that Vancouver could at any time record dust.

Directors promised that the Exhibition would be an annual event and 1911 saw more livestock and more interest in that department. One of the livestock novelties of that year was

a display of nine head of Dexter-Kerry cattle, the little black breed of Ireland. These specimens, rarely seen west of the Atlantic Ocean, were owned and shown by Rolston Brothers of Vancouver. Many an Irishman halted, "riverently" behind them and muttered something about the "poor man's cow."

Judging, as conducted in the horse ring that year, was facetiously called "Trial by Jury". There were six judges and at the beginning of each class, four of the six names were drawn from a hat. The three whose names were drawn first, were the judges and the fourth name to be drawn elected the referee. The strange technique appeared impressive but it was slow and cumbersome and in some classes the judges in the ring outnumbered the contestants.

Operations expanded year by year except for a minor setback in 1914. Rains were more persistent than usual for Vancouver and during the week of the fair, it rained for five days, averaging over an inch a day and leaving the Board of Directors with its first deficit. But the Exhibition was held annually without interuption, even during the period of the first World War when troops were stationed at the Park.

Attendance exceeded one hundred thousand for the first time in 1919. It fell back slightly in the next year on account of weather, but the fact that over ninety thousand people would attend when six inches of rain fell in five days, is in itself somewhat of a record. Best of all, people from beyond Greater Vancouver, were coming in ever increasing numbers. For 1927, Manager J. K. Matheson reported an attendance of two hundred and eighty thousand but his principle boast was an estimate that sixty percent of British Columbia's farming population had attended.

Vancouver, more than many Exhibitions, was conscious of the province's resources in wood, minerals and fish. For the 1913 event, there was a new Forestry Building constructed from native trees of various species and sizes and still in the bark. In itself the building was a study in Foresty and on the inside were the products of forests and mines, which at that stage of the fair's life, were rather more impressive than the livestock.

From the earliest years, dairy cattle constituted the most strongly contested department in the agricultural section. The proximity to some of the most noted breeding herds in Canada



and the importance of dairying in the Fraser Valley contributed to the unparalleled record. When Professor George Raithby judged the Holsteins at Vancouver in 1949, the long lines of entries inspired him to say that no regional show in Canada could equal it.

Draft horses made a strong showing for many years, but at some of the earliest shows, as well as at more recent shows, the light horses were more numerous. In 1913, folk said that the Light Horse Show seemed to be competing with the new Automobile Show for chief honours. But those who speculated about whether the light horses or the automobile would survive, would have been surprised had they been able to look into the future and see the large number of both cars and horses at the Exhibition of 1950, with no conflict whatever between them.

The Vancouver horse ring saw some of the best jumping in the West. West Coast patrons saw Peter Welsh's great horse, Barra Lad, jump in 1925 and some drove the few miles to New Westminster to see him again on September 12, 1925. On that latter occasion they saw more than they could have anticipated; they saw the temperamental horse, with ears back and nostrils distended, spring almost cat-like into the air to clear the bars at eight feet, one and one-half inches, to establish a world record. But the sad epilogue was that five hours after making the jump, that famous horse, raised just a few miles from Vancouver, dropped dead from internal hemorrhage.

The opening of the Panama Canal shortened many of the important sea-lanes leading to Vancouver and promised to bring British Columbia lumber, minerals, fish and agricultural products closer to world markets. Vancouver, with natural harbour advantages, was assured of growing importance and the Exhibition accepted the challenge of broadened responsibilities.

The British Columbia Winter Fair was added to the annual programme in 1925 and served to bring fat stock exhibitors together for a pre-Christmas show each year. But with falling income from grants, the Exhibition Board began casting about for other means of revenue. It was resolved as a matter of policy to make the Exhibition programme more nearly self-

supporting. In 1931, the Exhibition Forum was constructed to

supporting. In 1931, the Exhibition Forum was constructed to accommodate concerts, circuses, skating and hockey.

The Exhibition Plant was to be a park for every day recreational pleasure and an all-year Sports Centre. In 1931, the Association carried the plan a step farther, built a standard Olympic athletic track in the oval in front of the grandstand, for benefit of the public. Thereafter, thousands of young folk and about as many who were not so young, trained and played, enjoying the facilities provided at no cost by the Exhibition Association.

Vancouver pointed with pride to the achievements of her sons and daughters at national and international sports contests and did not forget that the Sports Centre at Exhibition Park had made its contribution to success in the contests and better still, to the health and vigour of the Province's youth. Strange as it seemed, while hundreds of people were skating or curling on the ice within the Forum Building, others were golfing on the same grounds, only a few yards away.

New Westminster's misfortune in the loss of Fair Buildings

and the necessity of discontinuing its Exhibition programme, turned to the advantage of Vancouver. On the 167 acres comprising Exhibition Park, were extensive stabling, spacious exhibit buildings, a big show ring, good facilities for displaying industrial products and one of the best five-furlong race tracks in Canada. The racing unit could accommodate 20,000 spectators.

Clearly, it was not a plant that was limited in its use to a short Exhibition season each year; it was geared to numerous uses, amusement, promotional and educational.

For a period during the second Great War, that park was occupied by the Department of National Defence and it was

necessary to suspend the annual Exhibition. But planning was not suspended and in 1947, when the first post war show was held under the banner of "The Pacific National Exhibition", attendance jumped to 586,917, a figure that could be taken to represent well over half the population figure for the Province of British Columbia. The Exhibition of 1949, with an attendance of 639,387, qualified for the distinction of being second largest in Canada.

Industry and resources were held in a prominent position



but the emphasis continued to be on Agriculture. The Exhibition of 1949 could show 449 entries in horses, 791 in cattle, 483 in sheep, 141 in pigs, 144 in goats, 665 in poultry, 655 in field crops and vegetables and 147 in fruits.

One of the striking features of the Exhibition of that year was the extent of Junior Farmer participation; 367 young exhibitors presented 865 entries. The Boy Guests who were entertained by the Exhibition for the first time in 1916, were the forerunners of an enrollment of 400 boys and girls from rural areas, attending as official guests in 1949. That number did not include the teams of 4-H Club members and Future Farmers of America who attended as guests from the United States. It was the Vancouver version of the Farm Boys' Camp.

No Fair or Exhibition in Canada did more for junior competitors and junior guests. Even in the war years when an Exhibition could not be held, directors showed their determination to support an active and a continuing junior programme. During that period of the Second World War when Vancouver's Exhibition Park was being utilized fully by the Armed Services, the Junior Programme was carried on with Vancouver Exhibition support at Chilliwack. The importance of continuity was recognized.

Vancouver's manager, V. Ben Williams, believed that in and about an Exhibition, science, practice and the cultural arts should meet. An Exhibition must not become married to past performances. It should retain the best of the past and build better. A good manager is an Exhibition Test Pilot, flying new ideas, new competitions and new demonstrations that would be attractive, useful and stimulating to the community.

The Pacific National, at the mid-point of the century was leading with various advanced features like the Hobby Show, the Free Outdoor Theatre, the completely new International Flower Show, the Western Music Roundup and other enterprises, equally worthy and equally novel.

That Hobby Show, with its cultural and mechanical treasures, exhibited by well over a thousand people, was the best possible demonstration of Canadian interest in crafts and applied arts. It was an Exhibition within an Exhibition, growing bigger year by year and telling about unusual talent and craftsmanship in wood carving, metal work, photography, weaving, pottery and

machine model making. The model ships; the "smallest saw-mill in the world", (operating during the 1948 Exhibition); and miniature railroad trains were masterpieces in mechanical skill and monuments to human patience. And for the person interested in the more unusual novelties, there were codfish skull jewelry, cobweb portraits and pictures made from human hair.

From its beginning in 1940, when it was opened formally by David Elman, of Hobby Lobby broadcast fame, the Hobby Show offered an avenue through which the members of Vancouver's Magic Circle expressed themselves. It was popular from the beginning, so popular in fact, that during its first week, the doors of Exhibition Garden Building in which it was housed, had to be closed periodically in order to control the crowds.

With the passing years, the Vancouver Hobby Show attracted the hobby artists from greater distances, until it became more or less International in character. And for many persons in whom artistic and mechanical talent was lying dormant, the Hobby Show served to awaken new interests and led to new and worthwhile pastimes. The Pacific National Exhibition's Hobby Show held a thousand varied specimens to inspire anyone interested in Canadian culture and Canadian handiwork. It was said to be North America's greatest Hobby Show and as such it brought pride to all Canadians.

The Outdoor Theatre, offering free programmes of high class entertainment every afternoon and evening during Exhibition time, served to present West Coast people with the opportunity of seeing as well as hearing many well known artists from stage, screen and radio. A visit to the Outdoor Theatre was an experience with musical and theatrical personalities appearing and offered many of the rich advantages that went with the Chautauqua, of which Western Canadians knew more in some earlier years.

To symbolize Forty Years of Exhibition Progress, and sharpen the contrast with 1910, the Pacific National had two new and sparkling features for the mid-century Exhibition. One was the International Flower Show and the other, a "Rodeo without horses", the World Championship Western Music Roundup.



The International Flower Competitions were as fresh as the flowers themselves. The City of Vancouver was at an Airways Crossroads and the "Flowers by Air" competitions invited floral beauty from any place on the globe. Roses, gladioli, chrysanthemums and other blooms were delivered from scores of points on the Western Hemisphere. Prizes were attractive and the premium award was a silver trophy offered by the Exhibition Association for the best collection of cut flowers, grown in any country, on any continent.

Nations might disagree about many things, but not about flowers. While there were numerous and unpleasant reminders of national differences, the "Flowers by Air" competitions reminded all that ideals about true beauty are common to all mankind. The flowers at Vancouver seemed to speak with an International tongue.

To attract the specialists in and makers of Western Music, wherever they might be, the Pacific National Exhibition offered \$15,000 in prizes for 27 competitive events. Singing and playing stars from across the continent were invited to attend and take part in that Western Musical Festival. Young fellows and old, guitar players, musical cavalleros and orchestras composed entirely of members over 50 years of age, found classes to fit their talents.

For the world's best Square Dance Orchestra, having four pieces or more, the first prize was \$1000; the second prize was \$500 and third, \$200. For Western Vocal Groups, open to the world, the prizes were the same. It was all on a grand scale. For individuals competing, the prizes were correspondingly handsome; in the class for Best Old Time Fiddler, the first, second and third prizes were \$500, \$150, and \$50, respectively.

Such a concentration of Old Time and Western Musical romance had not been presented before. It was something quite different in Musical Festivals and it had a strong popular appeal.

There was no suggestion that anything in the nation's varied interests was more important than the work of the farmers, whose business was food production. There was no thought of reducing the prominence reserved by the Exhibitions for Agriculture. In the centre of things at Vancouver's Mid-

Century Exhibition was a dairy cattle display that would grace an International Exposition; the best light horses along the Coast and up the Valley were there to inspire big crowds; the other livestock were numerous and high in quality; the fruits and vegetables made an imposing show and one day of the Exhibition was marked as International Junior Farmers' Day.

There was no doubt about it; Agriculture was still at the heart of the Exhibition, but Canadians were not to make the mistake of trying to live by bread alone. Perchance the cultural side of Canadian life had not received its fair share of attention. Canadians, with brilliant records of practical achievement, were rather backward in national art, songs, poems and literature.

The Pacific National had a lot to show for its 40 years. It was Western Canada's biggest Exhibition. Its own growth told of the spectacular development of the Province of British Columbia. It was a regional link between the past and the future, telling of past accomplishments but pointing to still better things in progress and achievement.

Of the 1950 Exhibition, Professor Harry King, its president, said.

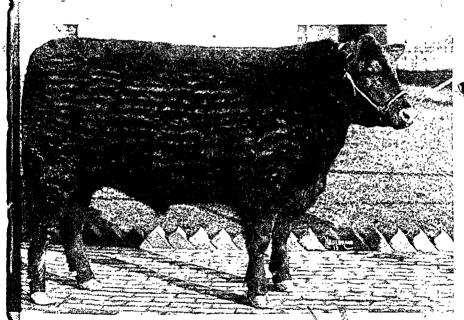
"Within these gates we present a composite picture of British Columbia . . . . an annual record of growth and achievement in all lines of human endeavour".

The Pacific National Exhibition was bearing down upon its objective, and when the records broken at the 1950 Exhibition were counted, directors didn't fail to recognize that the 257 children which had been lost, found and returned to their parents, represented an "all time" high.

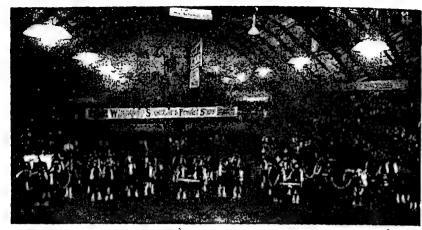




Prize Herd of Fat Cattle at Winnipeg in 1897 and 1898, owned by D. Fraser & Sons, Emerson. Average Weight was one ton.



Glencarnock Victor 2nd was the Grand Champion Steer at Chicago International in 1913. for J. D. McGregor of Brandon.



Thirteen entries lined up in the class for four-horse teams at Brandon Winter Fair,



A Scene at Calgary's Famous Bull Sale.

#### CHAPTER XII

## THE WINTER FAIRS

"There is nothing I enjoy more in the year than my annual visit to the Royal Winter Fair at Toronto".

Lord Tweedsmuir.

Gradually the programmes of the progressive Agricultural Societies or Fair Associations were enlarged to extend over more of the calendar year. The annual Summer Fair or Exhibition that stood alone in the early years, was to become a partner with other annual events. This was as it should be. At one exhibition city on the prairies, cited merely as an example, the annual programme came to include the Summer Exhibition, the Autumn Sheep and Swine Show and Sale, the Dressed Meat and Poultry Show, the Spring Horse Show and the Fat Stock Show.

Of these, none except the Exhibition and perhaps the Horse Show could be self supporting. Most Winter Fair events were strictly service enterprises with no races, no bathing beauties, no midway and no games. They were utility shows, and in the absence of revenue-bearing features, it took the profits from the exhibition along with government grants to provide support.

Compared with the Exhibitions, the events in the Winter Fair Programme were quiet and serious. But they were not without glamour; they were the "fashion shows" of the livestock industry, featuring market types and commercial requirements. And their usefulness was clear.

The Winter Fairs were relatively late in starting in Western Canada and not many operated before the turn of the century. The earliest of which the writer has found a record was at Stonewall, Manitoba, on December 20, 1882. It was called

a Fat Cattle Show and Seed Fair and was sponsored by the enterprising Rockwood Agricultural Society. Prizes by the standards of that day, were generous, \$10. for first and \$5. for second in classes for fat cows, fat steers and fat heifers. Attendance was not big but on the strength of interest displayed by cattlemen, it was decided to hold a "monthly cattle fair" at Stonewall, at which all the entries would be sold for beef.

A few other Societies followed the Stonewall example. Minnedosa held a cattle fair for market purposes on October 9, 1884, but only 12 animals were brought forward. Brandon had one in December, 1884, and several of the same kind in 1885. It looked like a "throw-back" to the Market Fairs of Old England.

During the '90s, the Winnipeg Market took on some of the character of a Winter Fair for a few days each December. It was really a pre-Christmas display of meats and meat animals, and while there were pigs and pork, steers and beef, sheep and mutton, poultry, venison, rabbits and bear meat, the most interesting and indeed the most significant exhibits were those set up by two rival butcher firms, Kobold and Sons and Gallagher and Sons. The Kobolds fed their own stock while Gallaghers featured the show cattle fed by Donald Fraser of Emerson a man who was considered to be the best feeder in the West.

Heavy steers were the order of that day. Weight was more impressive than quality. It was a Kobold steer called Big Ben that won the sweepstakes at the Provincial Exhibition at St. Boniface in 1886, at the tidy weight of 2650 pounds. And Big Ben continued to grow until slaughtered at the following Christmas, so they said. The steer that was considered the best at Winnipeg's Christmas Market in 1891, was Big Donald, 2456 pounds of Shorthorn, and Champion at the previous Industrial Exhibition for Donald Fraser.

The struggle to produce and show the biggest fat cattle continued for another decade. At the Christmas Market Show in 1894, Kobold and Sons had carcasses from three steers that weighed a total of 7200 pounds, and Gallagher and Sons had two Fraser steers called Little Johnny and Big Johnny, weighing a total of 4500 pounds. Visitors of the show in 1898, saw Gallagher's 4-year-old Shorthorn, champion at the previous



Industrial Exhibition and weighing 2550 pounds; they saw Kobold's 3-year-old carrying 2350 pounds and a lot of other cattle weighing a ton or better. Next summer at the Winnipeg Exhibition, D. Fraser and Sons from Emerson were again at the top with two steers, Tupper weighing 2300 pounds and Clinker weighing 2100 pounds. Now, however, there was talk about lighter cattle and some of the on-coming Winter Fairs pointed up the new trend.

Significant as the Christmas Market Show was in certain respects, the real forerunners of the modern Winter Fair were the Spring Stallion Shows or the Stallion and Bull Shows, such as became popular in the West after 1888. Again it was Portage La Prairie that led the way. The Portage Society totally ignored the competition created by a small war up the way of Duck Lake, and held a Stallion and Bull Show on April 15, 1885. They called it the first annual event, and provided classes for "Durham, Ayrshire, Hereford and Polled Angus" bulls.

By the spring of 1889, the stallions and the bulls were having their spring fairs at a number of places, Oak Lake, Pilot Mound, Boissevain, Portage la Prairie, Shoal Lake, Birtle, Binscarth, Morden, Virden, Glenboro and Minnedosa, in Manitoba, and at Carnduff and Grenfell in the North West Territories. Portage la Prairie, still in the forefront, offered the unprecedented prizes of \$100 for first and \$50 for second in Clydesdale stallions that year, and made it clear that the winning stallion would be expected to stand for public service in the immediate district. It was an idea taken from the Glasgow Stallion Show in Scotland.

Cannington Manor had such a show in April of the next year (1890) and as might have been expected in that unusual community, most of the interest was in the Thoroughbred horses; Beckton Brothers won the stallion championship with their Kentucky-bred racing stallion, Jase Phillips, a horse about

which the west country was to hear more.

The first Spring Shows with a broad programme, resembling a modern Winter Fair, were held in 1904, one at New Westminster in British Columbia and the other at Neepawa. The latter on February 16 and 17, had cattle, pigs, poultry, grains and public lectures and repeated the programme next year. Regina embarked upon the broader programme embracing

cattle, horses, sheep and pigs, in 1905, and Winnipeg conducted the first ambitious Horse Show in which light horses were featured, in June, 1905.

Brandon was not first in Winter Fairs of modern pattern, but that city may claim a most glorious Winter Fair history. There the moguls among pioneer horse breeders and importers came together to do battle and there the Junior Baby Beef competitions originated. There had been Spring Stallion Shows at Brandon as early as 1892, but with no particular accommodation. A Winter Fair with proper facilities and organized along broad lines was J. D. McGregor's idea, as was also, the Baby Beef competition.

The Master of Glencarnock was a visitor at the first International Fat Stock Show at Chicago in 1900 and came away determined that Brandon should have something of the kind. J. D. McGregor, Joe Donaldson, Archie McPhail and some others talked about it repeatedly. A plan was finally evolved and at a public meeting early in 1907 a joint stock company to be known as the Brandon Winter Fair and Livestock Association was formed and shares were sold at \$100. each. The objective was \$35,000 with which to erect a building, 120 feet by 228 feet. When completed in the spring of 1908, the new building stood at \$20,000 above the estimated cost and a new money raising campaign was inaugurated. The extra capital was secured, however, and secured without assistance from either Civic or Provincial or Federal Government.

J. D. McGregor was indeed the father of that Winter Fair. He was the first president and remained in office for fourteen years. Andrew Graham was the first vice-president and Charles Fraser was appointed Secretary and Manager at a salary of \$100. per year. Fraser was followed by W. I. Smale who in November, 1910, assumed a dual role in the management of Summer and Winter Fairs.

The purpose of the new organization was clearly set out in its constitution,

".... to encourage improvement in the breeding and management of live stock by the holding of a winter exhibition of stock."

When the first full scale Winter Fair was held in the new



building in March of 1908, both entries and visitors exceeded accommodation. It was an auspicious beginning. Horses "stole the show". More stallions were gathered together than anyone in the West had seen. The hosts of horsemen who made headquarters at Brandon and helped to make it the western centre of stallion sales, were there. One thinks of Colquhoun and Beattie, Trotter and Trotter, Alexander Galbraith, J. B. Hogate, J. A. McMillan, and later Ben Finlayson who together handled millions of dollars worth of horses and looked upon Brandon's show-ring as the "Supreme Horse Court". Where else but in Brandon could the Winter Fair's Official Opening be coupled with a parade of 200 draft stallions such as spectators witnessed in 1913? Where else could one see 41 two-year old Clydesdale stallions lined up in one class, as they did in March of 1912 when Dunure Sparkling Hope won for Mutch of Saskatchewan?

Those mighty annual tan-bark battles for stallion supremacy began with the first Winter Fair in 1908, when "Scottie" Bryce's recently imported Clydesdale, Perpetual Motion, had to defeat such earlier winners as Baron of Arcola, Flash Baron, the \$5000. Lord Ardwell, Lord Gartly, Mark Twain 2nd, Chamberlain Joe and others famous in breed history, in order to achieve the grand championship. After that, at least half the school boys in Manitoba spent their idle moments drawing sketches of Perpetual Motion on their slates. Neither Jack Johnston, Man o'War nor Babe Ruth could have enjoyed more local admiration than the champion in the Clydesdale classes at Brandon Winter Fair.

No horse judge accepted the Brandon assignment for its holiday value. The show there was called the "Stallion Storm Centre".

'Students from the new Agricultural College at Winnipeg came to the first Brandon Winter Fair to enter the judging competitions in livestock and grains, and names now familiar to Westerners appeared among the winners. J. C. Smith who later became Livestock Commissioner for Saskatchewan, and Charles Yule who manages the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, were mentioned as leading the field in livestock classes, and T. J. Harrison, later Professor Harrison, was second in judging wheat.

When the Mental Hospital was burned, the Brandon Winter Fair Board placed its buildings at the disposal of the Provincial Government and the Winter Fairs of 1911 and '12 were conducted amid difficulty in Summer Fair quarters. But Brandon needed more accommodation for its winter show anyway, and in 1912 with the city guaranteeing the bonds, the Winter Fair Arena was built. Fire destroyed the stables in 1921, but in the following year, with Provincial Government aid, the present fire-proof barns were constructed to make for the best Winter Fair plant in the west at that time. The Provincial Government declared its intention to make the Brandon Winter Fair a provincial institution with the backing of the whole province. In October, 1946, the Marritoba Government presented the buildings to the City of Brandon, with the understanding that the Manitoba Winter Fair would be a preferred tenant.

Brandon lived up to its traditions for good horses and good cattle and other agricultural things. And while it was Perpetual Motion who was being sketched on school slates in 1908, they were the International champion steers, Glencarnock Victor and Glencarnock Victor 2nd that enjoyed the distinction in 1913 and 1914. Victor 2nd was brought back from Chicago and as he stood in a pen at the Brandon Winter Fair in 1914, he reminded cattlemen who admired him, that it was the first time in the history of the International Fat Stock Show at Chicago, that anyone had won two steer championships in successive years. Brandon's president, J. D. McGregor of Glencarnock, had done it and brought honour to Western Canada. Perhaps the spectators didn't think of it, but the thick, compact, smooth Victor 2nd presented a strangely different appearance from the massive, rough, 2400-pounders being shown at Winnipeg's Christmas Market Show of just 15 years before.

Regina was the pioneer with Winter Fairs in the territory that became the Province of Saskatchewan. Spring Stallion Shows were annual events for many years, the first being held on Regina's main street in 1891. Three show classes were provided, Draft Stallions, General Purpose Stallions and Standard Breeds. The draft stallions were supposed to have pedigrees and were mostly Clydesdales with an occasional Shire. The



horses in the second class were a mixed population of Suffolk Punch, undersized Clydesdales and some that had no reason to be proud of their ancestry. At the second Spring Show (1892) a class was made for Thoroughbred stallions and Mr. Lawson's Derwentwater won it and the sweepstakes for the best stallion of any breed. To win the latter, the Thoroughbred was placed above Robert Sinton's Clydesdale, Press On, and it was considered by the ringside to be a very daring decision.

But these were not real Winter Fairs. Innovation came in the spring of 1905, when Regina offered what it chose to call a Fat Stock Show and Judging School. It was the first typical Winter Fair in the North West Territories and it coincided with Saskatchewan's creation as a province. The noted show horse, Baron's Gem, owned by Mutch Brothers was champion stallion; Robert Sinton won the Hereford championship; George Kinnon of Cottonwood had the champion steer, a beast nearly as big as the champion stallion, and A. B. Potter of Montgomery had the champion barrow. After the steers, barrows and wethers were judged on foot, they were slaughtered and shown again in carcass competitions.

It was while that original Regina Winter Fair was in progress that the foundation was laid for the Saskatchewan Live Stock Associations, with Alderman Robert Sinton as the

president and Alex Mutch, vice-president.

Regina City Council recognized the value of the Winter Fair and came forward with financial assistance to provide suitable buildings. A new building with stables, judging ring and seats for 1500 people, was ready for the Spring Show in 1907.

Before me as I write is an announcement about the Annual Provincial Fat Stock Show at Regina, March 18-20, 1908. Interested parties were invited to write to the Secretary and Managing Director, John Bracken. Regina's annual Bull Sale, under sponsorship of the Cattle Breeders' Association, but more or less welded to the Winter Fair, had its beginning that year. Thirty-four Shorthorn bulls made the "handsome average" of \$85. and six Herefords, \$82. That was one bull sale in which Regina had a better average than Calgary. The latter's average for 111 bulls sold that year was \$63.91.

Regina developed an important Sheep and Swine Show that was conducted annually without interruption for many years

and built up a Light Horse Show that was unsurpassed in the West. The first Light Horse event was in April, 1914, a brilliant enough show in the Winter Fair Building. Regina society turned out in best clothes to see the horses from East and West. Visitors saw the Strathcona Horse perform, and the Mounted Police Musical Ride; and they saw The Wasp from the Sifton Stables, clear the jumps at a height of seven feet, two inches.

Intentions were that this would be an annual affair but war interrupted the plan and it was nearly 20 years before the Light Horse Show was resumed as a regular Winter Fair feature. The redesigned Horse Show was constructed with special thought of what spectators wanted to see and with determination to eliminate delays. The result was that for three or four nights during Winter Fair week each March, Regina had a "full house" of citizens who were experiencing a growing interest in good horses. Of its Horse Show, Regina said, "There may be others larger but none better".

Everybody expected Calgary to be different, even in programming a Winter Fair. And the City of the Foothills managed to live up to expectations. The annual Stallion Show of early years was expanded in 1905 to a Horse Fair and then to an all-embracing Winter Fair. The light horses came prominently into the Winter Fair programme in 1909. But the various Winter Fair events of recent years namely Horse Shows, Fat Cattle Competitions and Sheep and Swine Shows, became overshadowed by the magnitude and fame of the Annual Bull Sale. It became a North American classic.

Back of the Calgary Bull Sale was the Territorial Pure Bred Cattle Breeders' Association, organized on September 16, 1900, through the efforts of C. W. Peterson, then Deputy Minister of Agriculture at Regina. In 1905, with the creation of the midwestern provinces, the Alberta Cattle Breeders' Association came into existence and continued, with the co-operation and facilities of the Calgary Exhibition Association, to operate the Bull Sale. Through the years, the Manager of the Exhibition was secretary of the Cattle Breeders' Association, providing a desirable liaison and making the work of both organizations more effective.

At the first sale, held in the Frontier Stables at the corner of 8th Avenue and 2nd Street, W., in April 1901, 64 bulls



were sold and the average price was \$85. Free delivery of the bulls purchased was a special inducement and the highest price was \$250. and the lowest, \$35. Some of the specimens were "mostlyllegs and horns" according to one who recalled the event but still they were better than most of the cattle in the country.

Progress was noted almost every year. In the second year, a bull show preceded the bull sale and a horse show was added. The bulls were mostly Shorthorn and only one breeder, Mossom Boyd of Prince Albert, had Herefords. In 1905, with a few more than 300 bulls, E. L. Richardson said there were too many and the price average was \$64. The champion Shorthorn bull of that year brought \$225 and the champion Hereford was considered well sold at \$175.

At the 49th sale in 1949, the story was very different. The 1002 bulls sold commanded \$638 each on the average, to set a new record. More bulls were sold at the 1950 sale. A total of 1162 bulls changed hands, 772 Herefords, 219 Shorthorns, and 171 Aberdeen Angus, and the overall average was \$540. In the 50 annual sales, some 23,000 bulls going through the ring, realized well over six million dollars. Such a record stood out like Mount Everest. And it was in an area where 75 years before, buffalo were so numerous that to Reverend John McDougall, they gave the appearance of dark waves on a vast sea of grass.

Speaking of the Bull Sales of recent years, Charles Yule said that at Perth in Scotland, they sell bulls to more countries; at Denver, Colorado, they sell more bulls in groups and carloads and at Buenos Aires in Argentina, they command higher prices, but there is no place in the world where they sell more bulls, one at a time, than at Calgary. It takes four long days to sell all the bulls at a modern Calgary sale; five auctioneers working in relays begin each morning at nine o'clock and sell without interruption or recess until six in the evening. At times during the 1950 sale, 5000 spectators filled seats and standing space and watched with the attention that might be expected at a wrestling match in Winnipeg.

The various sales of pure bred stock held at the Exhibition Grounds at Calgary in the Single Year, 1949, grossed nearly

\$700,000.

It was at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Saskatoon Exhibition on September 17, 1912, that W. C. Sutherland, for whom the town of Sutherland was named, presented a formal proposal about a Winter Fair for that City. Everybody agreed that it was a good idea but nearly two years passed before anything was done about it. In June, 1914, a meeting was held in Mr. Sutherland's office and it was moved by Dean Rutherford and seconded by A. H. Hanson, "that a Winter Fair be held at Saskatoon, second week in March, 1915, and carried." Directors were elected and a committee named to arrange about securing the use of the Curling Rink in which to hold the fair.

Mr. Sutherland was elected President and C. D. Fisher who was then managing the Exhibition, accepted the double managerial assignment. But there were more set-backs and the first Winter Fair was held in the Curling Rink in the spring of 1916. The Saskatoon Poultry Association affiliated with the Winter Fair Board and success crowned those pioneer fair efforts.

In 1919, the Winter Fair had to be held at the Exhibition Grounds because the curlers couldn't spare their rink. But in 1929 a new and modern Winter Fair Stadium was built on the Exhibition property. As it turned out, it was a multi-purpose building, a Winter Fair Building at one season, an ice rink in winter, a Horse Show Building at times, an Automobile Show Building on a few occasions and ultimately, when war broke out, an Armories.

After Saskatoon's Stadium was converted to military use, directors were obliged to break with the orthodox pattern for Winter Fairs. The Spring Horse Show and the Fat Cattle Show were held separately, late in the season to avoid the cold weather and dependence upon indoor facilities. The Fat Stock Show was transformed to an outdoor event, centred at the Union Stock yards.

When it became impossible to conduct the annual Sheep and Swine Show as an autumn event, Saskatoon introduced one of the most constructive features of any western Winter Fair programme. It was the Dressed Meat and Poultry Show and the first one was in December, 1940. Contestants delivered their cattle, sheep and pigs alive at the Union Stock Yards and returned later in the week to see the carcasses hanging in



competition at the Meat Show. There producers saw their meat animals with hair, hide or feathers removed and there rural producers and urban consumers met to learn more about meats, witness an auction sale of carcasses, watch a meat cutting demonstration and register their views about weights, shapes, colours and degrees of fatness. At the first show there were 25 dressed pigs, six carcasses of beef, 12 lambs and 406 dressed chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys. More instructive competitions bearing on every-day food problems could not be found.

Saskatoonians have a flare for "getting to the bottom of things" and innovation became a rule. An original plan in the judging for its grand championships in fat cattle classes at Spring Shows, was adopted. It had happened too often that the grand championship steers at Winter Fairs were too fat or too wasteful when seen hanging in the meat room. They were champions on foot but undesirables when dressed. Said Saskatoon's meat conscious directors, "we will withhold the awarding of the coveted championships until the candidates for the honours are slaughtered and on the rail." They started it in 1938 and the first championship was won by Gilford Sandness from Kinistino.

Hence at Saskatoon's Fat Stock Show each spring until circumstances forced a change in 1950, the winning cattle in each class were taken straight away to be slaughtered. Early on the morning following, a judge of carcasses went to work and awarded the Grand Championship and Reserve Grand Championship to carcasses that were certain to please the meat trade and consumers, as well as set proper standards for the producers.

Edmonton undertook to do for Northern Alberta what Calgary was doing for the south, through Winter Fairs, Fall Shows featuring sheep and swine, Light Horse Shows in the spring and Bull Sales. The first Horse Show and Bull Sale was held under the auspices of the Exhibition Association in April, 1911. It wasn't a big event; 50 horses were brought forward for the show and 25 bulls for the sale. All but four of the bulls were sold, the average price being \$86. and the top, \$155. Almost at once directors and management drew plans for a new judging pavilion with the idea of placing the Winter Fair

on an annual footing. The ratepayers had already voted to provide \$175,000 for improvement in the Exhibition Grounds and \$100,000 of this was marked for a Pavilion.

Nature smiled upon the Edmonton country, gave it deeply hidden deposits of oil and covered everything about with good soil, good for mixed farming. Edmonton's Bull Sale came to be a big one and its Horse Show a good one, but in the large entry of singles, groups and carloads of fat cattle, the spring show in the City of the North, led all. Yes, Edmonton's special distinction was the biggest showing of fat cattle in Western Canada. It was consistent with the suitability of Edmonton's countryside for cattle finishing and general diversification.

What was said to be the biggest showing of fat cattle in Western Canada's Winter Fair history, was at Edmonton in the spring of 1947, when the entry and the sale included 19 carloads, 29 groups of five, 55 open singles and 49 Boys and Girls calves. And another record was made at the sale when all the fat cattle brought an average price of \$24.30 per cwt.

There were other shows in the Winter Fair category that did well, among them Kamloops which in recent years held two winter shows each year, a Christmas Fat Stock Show in December and a Bull Sale and Fat Stock Show in March. These were big events in the cattle country between the ranges of the mountains, and they left their mark upon the quality of meat eaten by the beef-lovers in Greater Vancouver.

Many specialized fair enterprises were conducted quite independently of the well known exhibition organizations. The rapid growth of the Boys' and Girls' Calf Club Movement, for example, resulted in numerous small Fat Stock Shows. Various organizations conducted Poultry Shows, Pet Shows, Fruit and Vegetable Shows, Flower Shows, Grain Shows and Feeder Shows.

The leading Feeder Shows in Western Canada had no direct connection with a fair or exhibition organization. The Moose Jaw Feeder Show had its own organization from the time of its inception in 1923 and the same could be said about Saskatoon's Feeder Show.

In the upper country of the British Columbia Interior, the annual cattleman's classic was the Williams Lake Feeder Show and Sale, sponsored by the Cariboo Cattlemen's Association



and the Cariboo Livestock and Fair Association. For a week each fall the town of Williams, Lake, deep in intermountain grass, looked like the capital of the Cattle Kingdom. Cattlemen from ranges and valleys in the vast districts of Cariboo and Chilcotin converged to exhibit, to buy, to sell or to visit. Anyone on the main street without a big hat and legs bowed from many days on a horse was conspicuous, but usually he did the best he could to correct the deficiency.

Herds driven over the long and twisty trails would begin to arrive several days before the show and as they arrived, were admitted to the stock yards to be sorted and weighed. Many of the cattle had travelled great distances to Williams Lake; those from Anahim Lake, away to the west, came 200 miles on foot and were on the trail some three weeks. For that period, the cowboy attendants ate their meals and took their rest in the shelter of camp wagons at the dusty end of the drives. But for the cattlemen who operated in those remote regions, Williams Lake was the only feasible outlet for the cattle and the Feeder Show there developed like no other fair in the world. To visit it was to feel the "Spell of the Cariboo".

There was discussion from time to time about an All Western Winter Fair, one that would be a climax show for half a nation. People who talked about it at meetings called it the "Western Royal". Some said it would be a "feeder" to the Canadian Royal at Toronto. The view finally accepted, however, was that if and when the West planned such a show, it should enjoy a distinctive character and be considered neither as a feeder to the Canadian Royal nor yet a threat to its All-Canadian supremacy.

The idea of an All-Western Winter Fair, planned on a grand scale, was popular and newspapers favored it. William Bradley when Agricultural Editor of the Western Producer undertook to determine public opinion and circulated 445 questionnaires to breeders, exhibitors, and public workers in agriculture. Of those who returned the forms, 74% favored a Western Winter

Fair at "Royal" level.

But many of those who supported the idea, did so recognizing the proposed show as a desirable luxury rather than a necessity. When the Western Association of Exhibitions assigned the problem for study, a number of practical difficulties revolving around time of year, location, facilities and financing, became clear. It was evident that such a fair would require heavy subsidization from Dominion, Provincial or Civic Government, and only a big city could hope to develop it. In final analysis, no western city or exhibition displayed much enthusiasm to take it. Greater Winnipeg with more than a quarter of a million population and a growing interest in being back in the exhibition business, seemed as a logical centre. But Winnipeg was without a coliseum and other suitable accommodation, Winnipeg was not ready.

Acceptible as a big, All-Western Winter Fair would be, the need could not be regarded as urgent and Westerners could remind themselves that they held a claim to the Canadian Royal at Toronto, a show that began in 1922 and operated each year except during the period of the Second Great War, of the Royal belongs to Canada and when the big fair opens teach November, spectators from every province in the nation lean across the rails and watch inter-provincial competition at its best.

elt is not easy to find the word with which to describe the Canadian Royal with its 26 acres of roof and barn accommodation for 1900 cattle. It's a World Fair, a Roman Holiday and an Old Home Week welded, together. Rapidly it became recognized as a sort of post graduate course for agricultural producers across the provinces.

Western Canada supported the Royal Winter Fair with exhibits, grants and attendance. And the West's record of winnings became increasingly impressive. When I stood in the judging ring at the Royal on November 19, 1949, I recalled that the date was an important although unnoticed Western Canadian anniversary. It, was exactly 80 years after the Hudson's Bay Company signed to relinquish its territorial claims in what was Rupert's Land. The signing of the document marked the end of a period when "fur was king" and the beginning of something new. The new was a period pregnant with rich possibilities in settlement, agriculture and industry.

And as I considered the wonders of those 80 years, I recounted some of the Western triumphs at the Canadian Royal during that day and that week. British Columbia had shown a

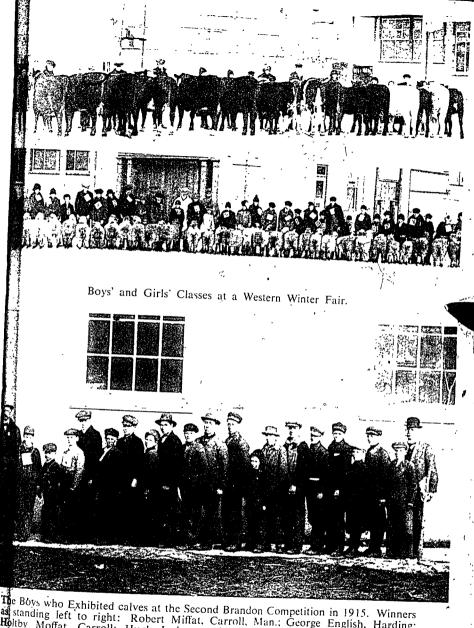


magnificent spread of apples and had won the World's Championship for wheat; Alberta had won the World's Championship for oats and barley, and the grand championships for single steers, carloads of fat cattle, Hereford bulls and Hereford females. Saskatchewan secured the grand Championships in rye grain, Belgian mares and Shorthorn bulls; and Manitoba had the supreme awards in butter, Percheron mares and Yorkshire sows. And the boys and girls who represented the West in the National Contests that week, won the biggest share of the best awards. Eighty years before, the West Country was buffalo pasture. The fairs were indeed a factor in the social and economic progress of those 80 western years.

Of the Canadian Royal in which Western as well as Eastern provinces had a stake, Miriam Green Ellis wrote,

onto opened its doors with the avowed purpose of being a 'show window' in which Canadian agricultural products might be exhibited to the world. It was based on idealism. Events have proved that even such a concept may strengthen with age and make a firm fabric. As Confederation sought to bring together geographical and political units in Canada, so the Royal aspired to federate, as it were, the agricultural purposes of the Dominion."





Be Boys who Exhibited calves at the Second Brandon Competition in 1915. Winners as standing left to right: Robert Miffat, Carroll, Man.: George English, Harding: Hollby Moffat, Carroll: Hugh Jackson, Alexander: Beman Hamilton, Neepawa: Herbert Chapman, Hayfield; Clarence Bird, Carievale, Sask.; Philip Robinson, Mill-Fred Heineman, Neudorf, Sask.; Harold Lowes, Brandon: Norman Mitchell, Douglas: Charlie Watson, Auburnton, Sask.; Duncan Campbell, Chater; Richard Leech, Bargark, Judge Leslie Smith of St. Cloud, Minnesota, stands at the forward end of the line and Manager W. 1. Smale at the opposite end.



Charles Yule Calgary Exhibition and Stampede



JAMES PAUL Edmonton Exhibition



THOMAS McLEOD Regina Exhibition



S. N. MACEACHERN Saskatoon Exhibition



S. C. McLennan Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba



V. BEN WILLIAMS Pacific National Exhibition

### CHAPTER XIII

# PIONEERS IN THE BIG "FAMILY OF FAIRS"

"Vast prairies lush with golden grain, Where Bison roamed from plain to plain; So richly blest from Heaven above, These sun-kissed Provinces we love.

Those men who pioneered this land, Resourceful, they a rugged band Held vision, their determined goal, Goodwill, this soil a world's food bowl.

Pre-Cambrian Shield with golden ore, Adds riches to our earthly store; Rivers and inland seas abound, The power from which sheds light around.

Its boundaries stretch to Hudson Bay, Across these plains from U.S.A. The people come from lands afar, With freedom as their guiding star.

Such glorious sunsets, skies of blue, This canopy, our hopes renew; Oh God, our Father, may we be, From war and insurrections free.

Great Sovereign of the Universe, Shed forth Thy light, the clouds disperse; Stretch forth Thy strong and guiding hand, Keep peace enthroned in this fair land.

Thy people here, Thy children we, In thankfulness, do bow the knee; For blessings from Thy boundless store, We'll praise Thee now and evermore."

Morley Story.

MID-WESTERN CANADA'S "CLASS B" CIRCUIT COMPRISES THE biggest "Family of Fairs" on the continent. Some of the members, now banded together in the "Western Canada Fairs Association", had their beginnings in pre-rail years and all had long records of service linking them with agricultural history and progress in the new land.

The "Patriarch" among them was Portage la Prairie's Fair, proud in achievement, dignified by age. Its unequalled record is related elsewhere.

Carman, with the second longest record, conducted its first fair under the sponsorship of the North Dufferin Agricultural Society, in 1880. They were determined men, those Carman pioneers and their annual agricultural competitions followed a steady and unbroken course. The Society was the first in Manitoba to place Seed Fairs on an annual and independent basis, offering its initial event in December, 1905.

While Carman's richest traditions were in seed grains and livestock, here was one town in which a horse race could draw a bigger crowd than a five-ring circus. The bigger exhibitions could adopt the Thoroughbreds if they chose, but Carman would remain true to harness racing and for several decades, the annual fair included one of the best racing programmes in the province.

And in 1950 when the Red River Valley was flooded, Carman staged an unscheduled fair with hundreds of evacuee live-stock from inundated districts to the east. Given temporary quarters at the Carman Fair Grounds were more than 500 cattle, 100 horses, 600 pigs, 5000 hens and chickens and 600 turkeys. The animals were not all of show calibre, but it was one more form of service.

In the area that is now marked by the Province of Saskatchewan, at least five fairs were started in 1884. One of them was held at Prince Albert, under the auspices of the newly formed Lorne Agricultural Society. The Society, named after the Marquis of Lorne, had its birth at a meeting of settlers at Pocha School, (now Lindsay School) in April of that year. Eighty-four members joined, paying a dollar each, and the first fair was held in the month of October.

Even the distractions of a nearby Rebellion failed to prevent a fair in the next year and for the fourth annual event, prizes



awarded totalled over \$1100, said to be "the most given in the Northwest for a like purpose."

After the Rebellion, according to John Curror, the board of directors became heavily weighted with Colonels, Majors and Captains, all very jealous of their exalted positions. One officer would nominate another for an Honorary or Life Membership, but when a plain Mr. Jackson moved an amendment, proposing another civilian for the honour, the military gentlemen were deeply incensed and indeed, insulted. Forthwith they offered a motion to expel the offender and refund his membership fee. Evidently there were enough ex-officers to carry the motion and the minute book showed a heavy pencil mark through the unfortunate member's name. Said John Curror, "apparently that ended his career."

From early prize lists one would see Samuel J. Donaldson's

From early prize lists one would see Samuel J. Donaldson's advertisement for the Grand Union Livery Stable. It carried a picture of the proprietor. On the stable's behalf, it boasted the best robes, horses and cutters in town, and on his own behalf, the greater boast that might attract more Prince Albert business then than now, "A TORY IN POLITICS." And from the minute book for about corresponding date, John Curror points to an appropriation of \$2.50 for the erection of a large tent to shelter the exhibits and for the entertainment of the "distinguished visitors." At the meeting following the fair, the director to whom the dual responsibility had been assigned, reported to the satisfaction of all that both purposes had been achieved satisfactorily at a total cost safely within the appropriation, \$1.25 for the tent and 50 cents for the entertainment of the "distinguished visitors." Prince Albert was never guilty of neglecting its guests, but one old timer has pointed out that Hudson's Bay whiskey could be bought at 50 cents a gallon at that time.

In 1905, the name was changed from Lorne Agricultural Society to Prince Albert Agricultural Society and in recent years, no Western Fair could show a longer list of important community events. The 1950 list included a six-weeks Agricultural School in the months of March and April; Bred Sow Show and Sale in April; Fat Stock Show and Sale in June; Bred Sow Sale in June; Annual Fair in August with about

40,000 people attending, and the Swine Show and Sale in October.

Moose Jaw's Fair began with a meeting held on July 26, 1884. An Agricultural Society was formed, with H. C. Battell as President and James Watson, as Secretary, and a decision was made at once to hold a fair in the following October. Grains, vegetables and ladies' work were shown in the Florida and McIntosh Building and the livestock in an adjacent lot. John Mawson who farmed later at Dundurn, was an exhibitor

John Mawson who farmed later at Dundurn, was an exhibitor at that first fair and won four first prizes, first for his wee daughter in the Baby Show, first on Mrs. Mawson's biscuits, first on a calf and first in the ox-team race on the street in Moose Jaw.

In the next year, 1885, there was a big improvement in the livestock with special interest centering on the exhibit of Aberdeen Angus cattle owned by Mr. Annable.

By the spring of 1900, the Moose Jaw Society was staging a Stallion Show, doing exactly the same as Regina and warning that neighboring city that Moose Jaw would soon have the leading Agricultural Fair in the Territories. Moose Jaw's Fair had its ups and downs, but it became one of the solid and progressive leadership institutions on the Prairies.

Yorkton held a fair in 1885. It was Rebellion year and the little town had a brand new stockade, built by fear-filled home-steaders. But by October, most of the logs used in the stockade were taken to make homestead cabins and the fair was held at the spot on which the fort had stood.

There were manifestations of progress; ten years later (1895) the best creamery butter at the Territorial Exhibition at Regina was from Yorkton and in the same year, Yorkton had its best show, with some novel competitions, even including a Gopher Tail Contest. In this latter competition the victor displayed 475 gopher tails to win the championship and the admiration of every boy big enough to set a snare over a burrow.

Yorkton followed the Carman pattern, and started Annual Seed Fairs in February, 1907. That part of Eastern Saskatchewan supported heavy populations of cattle and mighty cattle contests were seen in the Yorkton ring. And somewhere along the years, somebody started the famous Yorkton Chariot Races,



surpassed only by a Calgary Chuck Wagon Race, in point of dust and danger. As certain folk discovered, even those elected to act as judge, were not entirely removed from danger.

Red Deer Agricultural Society was organized in 1890 and held 59 Annual Fairs in the following 60 years. Like other societies, it fell upon bad times as well as good ones and Directors knew what it was to face the necessity of making personal guarantees in order to ensure the Fair's continuation. But such public spirit had its reward. Mixed farming prospered in that section of Central Alberta and so did the Annual Fair.

Red Deer Agricultural Society can boast one of the truly lovely settings for a fair grounds and the grounds, also, could make boasts, about big and keen contests, about Katherine Stinson who set her plane down on the Fair Grounds during the first Great War, and about the kangaroo that got loose on the Grounds and remained at large until finally roped by one of the lady directors. Without such a climax, kangaroos might have grown as numerous as bush rabbits in that part of Alberta.

Lethbridge, Vegreville, Camrose and Weyburn had long and imposing records. Vermilion organized in 1905 and held its first fair in the following year. North Battleford Agricultural Society was organized in 1906 and held its first fair in the same year. Except for the single year 1914, a fair was held in every year.

The Old Timer at North Battleford will tell you about the financial struggles experienced by the Society in the '30s, about the 800 fat cattle exhibited at the Society's Spring Show in 1947, to be the biggest showing in Canada that year, and about the Lieutenant-Governor, who came all the way from Government House at Regina to officially open the Fair and after a nice, lengthy speech, concluded with the declaration, "I now declare the Regina Fair, open." Yes, and the Old Timer may not have forgotten the horse race on the second day of the fair in 1930, when some young stock judges from Saskatoon sat in the grandstand and wagered a dollar each as they drew for the winner. The longest and meanest of the group held a ticket on a grey mare and the grey was winning easily, until, 20 rods from the finish, as the young man rubbed his fingers in anticipation of the five dollar reward, the grey mare dropped dead in her tracks.



The young man did rather better and recovered, but he bet no more on grey horses.

Melfort's Agricultural Society and Melfort's Fair dated from 1906 and served the fertile Carrot River Valley and beyond, Estevan had a small fair in 1906 and again in 1907, but it was not until 1911 that the present Agricultural Society began. The fame of the Annual "Border Derby" staged at the Estevan Fair, has gone about as far as that of the fair itself. When the late manager, Irwin Dean, appealed to the local Rotary Club for assistance in replacing the roof of the grandstand, which had been destroyed by a windstorm, Walter Schlosser and his committee organized the race and placed it upon an annual basis. It has been a feature of the fair through many years and Southern Saskatchewan children who never heard of the Kentucky Derby, talk familiarly about the Border Derby.

When the Barr Colonists went into North Western Saskatchewan in 1903, they had driven 200 miles from the nearest point on the railroad. Two years later those Englishmen had a small fair. It was in 1907, however, that the Agricultural Society was formed and the first well organized fair was conducted.

By this time the new town of Lloydminster was straddling the Saskatchewan-Alberta boundary and for a time the local people held two fairs, one on the Saskatchewan side of town and a few hours later, on the Alberta side. This arrangement was good for two Provincial Grants, until the Departments of Agriculture called a halt, advised Lloydminster to build one good fair and be satisfied with 50% of the regular grant from each of the two provinces. Lloydminster accepted the advice and built a good Fair, a good Fat Stock Show and a good Bull Sale.

British Columbia's Class "B" Fairs, Chilliwack, Armstrong, Kamloops and others, like their mid-western counterparts had the satisfaction of being close to the agricultural population.

### CHAPTER XIV

# FUTURE FARMERS AND THE FAIRS

"'Tis education forms the common mind; Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined."

Pope.

Greatest of a nation's resources is its people, and good citizenship stems from the educational influences of homes, schools, churches and other youthful associations. The work with juniors came to appear as one of the biggest opportunities confronting the fairs and exhibitions. Nothing seemed more certain than that Canada would continue to look to rural areas for many of her leaders. Greatness, it would seem, springs from country soil more readily than from pavements, but the flame must be kindled. There are Ministers of Agriculture, Deputy Ministers, Professors and administerators in high places who recognized the challenge of service in agriculture for the first time, when, as members of a Farm Boys' Camp, they were guests of the Exhibition.

One of the organized forces aimed at guidance for farm youth, is the Junior Club Movement that in 1950 had a Canadian membership of 54,081 boys and girls in 4,010 clubs. In Western Canada the movement began in 1913 when E. Ward Jones, serving under Dr. W. J. Black, Principal of Manitoba Agricultural College, organized a club at Roland. Before the end of that year there were clubs at Manitou, Starbuck, Warren, Darlingford, Oak Lake, Neepawa, and Stonewall, and the total membership in eight clubs was 472.

Members were given hatching eggs, seed corn, and potatoes and Club Fairs, at which the produce was exhibited, were part of the plan. Clubs could qualify for small grants in support of prizes and in that first year every club held a fair. At Roland,

263 chickens, 63 bushels of potatoes and 66 sheaves of come fodder were shown and one of the members went on to the Dressed Poultry Show at Brandon, making an entry there in every class.

The club idea spread rapidly and Club Fairs and School Fairs were popular and numerous. In 1920, Manitoba had 230 clubs and held 215 Club Fairs. Alberta had 126 School Fairs in 1929 and it was clear that they were capable of teaching the young exhibitors to be better husbandmen in caring for their calves, colts, lambs, pigs and chickens. So prominent were those Junior Fairs that people were heard to enquire if they might not supplant the Agricultural Society Fairs.

But ideas about club work changed. In Manitoba the programme for junior work was reorganized in 1929, taken over by the Department of Agriculture and placed upon a "club project" or specialized club basis, with Pig Clubs, Beef Clubs, Grain Clubs, Poultry Clubs and Garden Clubs. On this basis the work went forward in all the provinces, with emphasis in the right place, upon the boy or girl more than the product

with which he or she was working.

Some of the earliest impulses for the work with juniors came from the established fairs and exhibitions, and through the years those institutions gave support. Judging Competitions, popular in recent years were introduced in Western Canada in 1901. They had been tried at Toronto and Chicago the year before and Brandon Exhibition siezed upon the idea and appointed Dr. A. G. Hopkins of Winnipeg to supervise. Farmers and farmers' sons under the age of 30 years were invited to enter and the response, though not big, was considered satisfactory. Lack of experience and training made many of the young men who heard the announcement reluctant about entering.

In scoring that pioneer competition, 50% of the marks were allowed for the placings, 30% for reasons given in support of the placings, 10% for general technique and 10% for speed. A. B. Potter, a young breeder of Holsteins and Yorkshires from Montgomery, in the Territories, won the silver medal for judging dairy cattle and George Speers, of Oak Lake, won in beef cattle.

In the course of the next few years, the young man, who was



most prominent in the Judging Competitions held by the various fairs, was Charlie Yule. In 1905 he made almost a clean sweep of the competitions at Brandon and Winnipeg, being the winner in heavy horses, light horses and beef cattle at the former fair and in beef cattle and dairy cattle at the latter. It was the beginning of a judging career that was to take him into rings of those high courts at Perth, Scotland, the Canadian Royal and Chicago International.

The Strathcona Agricultural Society in Alberta may have been the first to provide special livestock classes for boys and girls at its annual Summer Fair. But several years passed before the idea became popular. The Canadian Seed Growers' Association began offering prizes for grains shown at Brandon and certain other fairs. And Dr. James Robertson, who was President of the Association, added a special award of a gold medal for the best exhibit of Red Fife wheat shown by boy or girl.

Wetaskiwin was in the vanguard also and began its special inducements in 1914 by providing a class for the heaviest and healthiest spring pig exhibited by boy or girl under 18 years. A pedigreed Duroc Jersey pig was offered as first prize and \$10 in gold as second. Why the money should be in gold is not clear unless the donors wished to imitate, as closely as possible, the colour of the Duroc Jersey.

Junior farmers, who were brought to the fairs as members of the clubs or Farm Boys' Camps, caught a glimpse of something better in agricultural practices and home improvement. It appeared as a step in building character and good citizenship and as such it was a service to agriculture and to the economic life of the nation.

When Ward Jones was organizing the first Junior Clubs in the West, Dr. A. W. Bell, Manager of the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition, was making plans to conduct the first Farm Boys' Camp. North Dakota State Fair had tried something like it as an experiment in 1912 and Dr. Bell may have had some knowledge of the trial. Anyway, it was announced early in 1913 that the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition would conduct a "Farm Boys' Club," and that the Exhibition would pay all travelling and living expenses for 100 boys from rural Manitoba.

The Club movement was not sufficiently mature to offer a suitable basis for the selection of the juniors for the excursion to Winnipeg, but Dr. Bell had an essay contest in mind. Farm boys, 14 to 19 years of age, were invited to write essays on the subject, "The Prairie Home." Notwithstand the traditional hatred that most boys have for writing essays, 370 entries were submitted and the 104 best qualified for the trip to the Exhibition. Above that there were prizes totalling \$200 available for the four boys, whose essays were judged the best.

Many of those entering that pioneer Exhibition Camp were boys who had experienced handicaps on account of interrupted schooling; many saw city streets and street-cars for the first time and all found the dazzling brightness of Portage Avenue by night to be a fascinating novelty. The educational programme was under the supervision of Ward Jones of Manitoba Agricultural College and included visits to the College, the abattoirs, the Stock Yards, Eaton's Store and the various sections of the Exhibition

Farm Boys' Camps and then Farm Girl's Camps became popular devices at most of the bigger fairs and exhibitions. In most instances the responsibility of selecting the individuals or teams was assigned to the Agricultural Societies. Dormitory life for a few days, a supervised educational programme and an exciting change of environment, made the experience of the camp one to remember for a lot of rural boys. It could be a stimulating experience.

Regina had the first Farm Boys' Camp in Saskatchewan. It was in 1915 and the 200 young farmers who attended were given course work in stock judging, grain judging and weed identification. Saskatoon took it up in 1918 and reached the very high attendance of 333 in 1939. Brandon started its annual Camps in 1924 with 17 teams of three boys each. Vancouver Exhibition inaugurated a similar plan but with a different name in 1916; they called it "Boy Guests" and built the enterprise to be a special feature. In 1949, the Pacific National Exhibition entertained 300 boy and girl "Guests' from rural areas. It was part of Vancouver's Junior Farmer Show. And some 200 Future Farmers of America and 4-H Club members from the neighbouring State of Washington visited Vancouver Exhibition at the same time.

Class "B" Fairs adopted the Farm Boys' Camp project also. North Battleford, Melfort, Yorkton and Prince Albert had camps in 1922. It was at Melfort in the heart of North Central Saskatchewan's black loam that the Camp idea assumed biggest proportions; enrolment in 1936 was 361 girls and 156 boys.

The Farm Boys' Camp was one thing and the Baby Beef Competition, that began also with the Fairs of Western Canada, was another. To Brandon goes the honour of starting the Boys' Calf Feeding Contests and indirectly, the Baby Beef Clubs which were to spread to almost every province and state on the continent.

It was J. D. McGregor's idea but he had Joe Donaldson and some other close friends with him. "Must get these young people into the cattle ring", said "J. D.", who was then President of the Manitoba Winter Fair. In 1914 the Winter Fair at Brandon offered the first class for Boys' Calves, born in the previous year. It was a North American landmark in the changing styles in beef. It signalled the trend toward lighter weights in market cattle. Just two years before, Joseph Donaldson won first prize there at Brandon with a steer weighing exactly 2,000 pounds. The Boys' Calf Class was the first major show ring departure from weighty steers.

Seven boys entered with calves and first prize was awarded to Joe Bowman from Forrest. Second went to George English from Harding, and third to Clarence Bird from Carievale, Saskatchewan. The class was small, but it was the spark to "set the heather afire." Joe Donaldson, who had been a staunch supporter of the competition, bought all the calves at prices that appeared good to the young exhibitors, and Winter Fair President, J. D. McGregor, announced that bigger prizes would

be offered "next year".

For the 1915 competition, the Canadian Bankers' Association donated \$1000 and the prizes were graduated from \$100 for first to \$25 for twentieth. Breed prizes were additional. Thirty-six calves were shown to make an attractive competition and the youngest exhibitor in the show, six-year-old Bobby Moffat, from Carroll, won with a Hereford heifer. One hundred and fifty dollars and a gold medal were his. In second position was George English, who was repeating his win of the previous year, and third went to Holtby Moffat, brother of the winner.

Brandon had a new feature and fairs east, west and south followed the example.

The Junior Competition at Brandon had a long record of success. In 1926 its scope was broadened to admit girls as well as boys and in 1928, the first prize and championship was won by a girl, Miss Emma Hamilton, whose black calf sold at auction for the then record price of three dollars a pound.

Brandon may have had the first Junior Calf Feeding Contest in the world but Saskatoon claimed the biggest. At Saskatoon, both the Exhibition Association and the Board of Trade were behind the mammoth effort and in the autumn of 1928, a deal was made with Rancher George Ross of Alberta to furnish a thousand Hereford calves to be distributed to boys and girls in the Saskatoon area. The price of the calves to the young people, who bought them, was approximately 11 cents a pound and the Royal Bank of Canada agreed to finance purchase wherever necessary.

On November 16th, 1160 calves were sorted and weighed at Saskatoon and distributed to eager youngsters; and seven months later, on June 14th and 15th, about 400 youthful exhibitors brought over 1000 of the calves back to Saskatoon to compete for \$5015 in prizes at the biggest show of its kind the country had seen.

The show was held at the Union Stock Yards and Frank Baker and an elongated young fellow, who had recently joined the staff of the University of Saskatchewan, did the judging Lieutenant-Governor, J. D. McGregor of Manitoba, came to open the fair and then His Honour auctioned off the champion calf, shown by Miles James of Vanscoy, selling it to The T. Eaton Company at 85 cents a pound. Prices averaged close to 15 cents a pound, which allowed the boys and girls a margin over purchase price of nearly four cents a pound. But best of all, a lot of young people had the benefit of the responsibility and the experience that went with feeding, halter breaking, fitting and showing. Sid Johns, who was Manager of the Saskatoon Exhibition, proclaimed it the best "boost" that mixed farming in that section had experienced.

All the fairs became conscious of the importance of Boys' and Girls' work and special classes for them became regular classes at both Summer and Winter Fairs. Children's Day

became an established institution at many of the fairs and some developed special programmes for the education and entertainment of the young folk. The Friday morning grandstand programme for boys and girls at the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede gained nation-wide fame. Anyone who had stood on the Calgary platform, while the livestock were being displayed, and looked into the faces of 20,000 squirming, screaming young Canadians felt one of the thrills an exhibition can afford.

But most of the boys' and girls' events produced some unscheduled thrills. At Saskatoon Exhibition on one of those Saturday mornings, a Shetland pony was to be given away. From a crowd of 5000 little people on the grandstand, the wee man who drew the lucky ticket came down to claim the pony presented by Fred Mendel. Before taking the new halter shank, the little lad reached into his pocket and produced a handful of sugar lumps that he had brought along for the pony he hoped to win. It was the brand of faith that should "remove mountains." And then Saskatoon's Fred Mendel said, "After this I will give three ponies instead of one." And he did.

The fairs and exhibitions can do something for the boys and girls, especially those from rural areas where opportunities may be limited. In carrying out such work, the fairs deserve the best support.





### CHAPTER XV

# MORE FOR THE RECORD

"In a good country fair there is more keen, honest, rivalry, good fun and practical education than in any other public affair at present devised and the country is not so crowded with public meetings and fraternal gatherings that such exhibitions are superfluous."

Vancouver Province.

It is not easy to estimate what the fairs and exhibitions have done for western agriculture and industry. There is no measuring stick to indicate in mathematical terms, the benefits of a day at the fair, where types and varieties of plants and animals needed to build Canadian trade are up for inspection, where new machines and new techniques are demonstrated and where a complete change from farm routine is possible.

Nor is it easy to calculate the value of actual show ring participation, where grower sees his animals or products side by side with the best that his competitors can show. In live-stock production very few herds and flocks have come to the fore in the absence of the show ring as a testing ground.

One will not look far to find examples of breeders and growers who discovered their inspiration at the fair. It was the first Provincial Fruit Show at Saskatoon that inspired a progressive fruit growing project among farming people in that section of the province. It was the Seed Fair that carried Seager Wheeler and his work upward and into the public view. The same could be said about other Western Wheat Kings, Samuel Larcombe, Herman Trelle, S. J. Allsop and others. The latter was a Junior Club member who went on to win distinction in the bigger competitions.

Seager Wheeler was the young English homesteader, who

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became so bold as to send a sample of wheat to the Provincial Seed Fair in 1911 and was both surprised and inspired when he won. That exhibition experience led to his wheat championship at the International Grain and Hay Show at Chicago in 1911, a distinguished win that he repeated in 1914, '15, '16 and '18.

There can be no doubt that the Good Farming Competitions, conducted for a number of years by Manitoba Agricultural Societies, had a lasting influence upon farming practice. Thirteen Manitoba Societies were conducting these as projects in conjunction with their fairs in 1911, among them Boissevain, Gladstone, Emerson, Minnedosa, Virden, Morris, Birtle, Hamiota and Stonewall. It seemed more than coincidence that those districts came so prominently to the fore in farm progress. The contests made people more conscious of methods and instilled a sense of pride in homes and fields.

Among the good examples is the record of a British Columbia boy who exhibited cattle at Kamloops. On the occasion of his first time in the ring, the calf he showed was neither handsome nor useful; it was altogether uninspiring and was placed near the bottom of the class. But boys placed at the foot of a class either give up showing or they improve. This lad was determined to do better. Next year he was near the top of his class and at the Kamloops Spring, Show in 1943; he and his brother had the grand championship for fat cattle and first prize in a big class for groups of five finished steers. In the sale that followed, Auctioneer Mat Hassen sold that richly fleshed champion for 40 cent a pound and the uniform group of five at a corresponding premium.

That was not the end of the story. The Annual Bull Sale followed the steer sale and the young man bought a superior Alberta-bred Hereford bull for \$700, and did it with the confidence that would do credit to a seasoned rancher. In a comparatively short time, the De Leeuw boys had risen to occupy foremost positions among progressive cattlemen in the Interior

of British Columbia.

Yes, the boy or adult who is placed at the low end of a class on the occasion of first adventure in the show ring will make an immediate retirement or he will progress. The first pure bred cattle shown by the MacEwans of Section 23, Township 44, Range 19, W. 2, were placed at the bottom and deserved nothing better. It would have been easy to give up at that time but persistence prevailed and the brutal lessons of the early experiences led to improvement and a championship or two.

Agriculture is a vigorous and changing thing. Unless alert, a person will not keep pace with it. The best progress has not been made by those who lived and worked in isolation, and on that point there is the testimony of a man who became one of the leading breeders of Aberdeen Angus cattle and did it all in an astonishingly short period of time. The story was told while the cattleman sat on one of those friendliest of seats, a bale of hay, there in the barns at Regina Exhibition.

He was Kenneth Holt, of Craven, Saskatchewan, and he was completing a successful trip around the Exhibitions. Behind him was neither a gold mine nor an oil well. Ken Holt "started from scratch" and he would divide the credit for his successes with cattle between a great sire and the impetus and experience gained at the exhibitions. "Without the show ring, I suppose I could never have discovered how valuable the bull was and he would have gone to the butcher years ago", said Holt.

The sire in question was Glenelg Cap Revolution, a grand-son of Blackcap Revolution. He was bred by Sam Henderson of Lacombe and sold to the Canadian Pacific Railway Supply Farm during one of the depression years, for a fraction of a hundred dollars. Kenneth Holt, a youthful Englishman, with some ordinary farm cows, bought the bull from the C.P.R. in 1937. A few steer calves from this sire were taken to Regina Winter Fair in 1939 and won consistently. The C.P.R. wanted to get the bull back and offered what seemed extravagant inducements, but Kenneth and Mrs. Holt talked it over and decided that, after the show ring demonstrations they had witnessed, they should retain the bull and buy some pure bred females to go with him.

The Holts bought five half-sisters of the bull from Sam Henderson and then things began to change. The Holts mustered courage to venture into the show ring at Moose Jaw and then Saskatoon and Regina. The ring confirmed their faith in the sire and in spite of many temptations to sell, they



retained him for an unusual number of years. At the age of 12 years, Glenelg Cap Revolution was still in use in the Holt herd.

Yes, Ken Holt bought his first pure bred females in 1939 and won his first championship in "big league" competition (at Saskatoon) in 1943. He became an ardent supporter of the fairs. In 1946 he had the largest number of "All Western" winners for Aberdeen Angus cattle and when he dispersed his herd that fall, the 120 cattle, including calves, realized over \$52,000. Said Holt, "A good sire and the lessons we learned at the fairs and exhibitions made our herd."

There was yet another service that the agricultural shows performed, one commonly overlooked, but one that should be recorded. They offered one of the few opportunities that many residents of towns and cities had to see a cross-section of the agricultural riches of the country. Those urbanites are the most important customers for farm products and their respect for the tasks performed by the men and women who make their living upon the land should be invited and encouraged.

Thus the fair can be a means of doing "Agricultural Public Relations" work well beyond the farming group. As a "show window" for agriculture, it should be for the eyes of country folk, urban folk, old and young, alike. When one has witnessed the sensations of discovery which come to some of the city-bred boys and girls visiting the Royal Winter Fair at Toronto, as they see a cow being milked, the educational opportunities seem very real.

One of the good features of a Canadian Fair or Exhibition is that it invites urban and rural people to come and mingle.

#### CHAPTER XVI

## THE ORGANIZATIONS

"The best advertisement in the public eye is the show-ring award and criticism."

James Burnett, Farmer's Advocate, July 3, 1907.

"Fair executives have a great opportunity to supply leadership. Their voices have not been heard sufficiently."

James H. Evans.

When governments gave support, it was to be expected that all fairs and exhibitions would conform to an approved pattern of service. It was not too much to expect that every fair should have a purpose beyond the personal ambitions of a few promoters and every fair should have a territory. Through the years, the fairs and exhibitions were reasonably adequate, numerically. More are not needed and new ones should not be permitted until a definite field for their service has been defined.

As early western fairs evolved, their development depended more upon local population and support than it did upon master planning. The bigger cities could support the most ambitious fairs, operating for a week or more, while many agricultural societies did well to provide one-day programmes. But it was discovered that there was a job for each general type of show. There was a place for that local, one-day show, with a modest prize list; there was a place for the big city-supported exhibitions of which Western Canada has had seven. And there was a place for those in-between or semi-local shows that developed the habit of operating for three days.

Speaking for the bigger shows of the Midwest, are two organizations, the Western Association of Exhibitions and the

Western Canada Fairs Association. They function side by side and trace to a common parent, the Western Canada Fair Managers' Association, organized in March, 1911. Prior to that date there was a loosely knit body known as Western Canada Fair and Racing Circuit, but it did little more than co-ordinate race meetings.

Confusion and conflict in the setting of fair dates were common. Brandon and Winnipeg selected the same dates in 1908. Caustic statements issued from the editorial pens at both points and both fairs were handicapped unnecessarily. Minutes of a meeting of the Regina Exhibition Board of December 10, 1909, tell a similar story of date stealing:

"the secretary was instructed to write Saskatoon Fair Board our regret at having to take their dates but owing to our fair days following Winnipeg and Brandon, no other course was open to us."

It was like writing to a farmer saying, "Please forgive me, but I needed a horse and found it convenient to steal yours." Such an incident didn't improve the already strained relations between two Saskatchewan cities when both had been trying desparately to secure the Provincial University. But it pointed to the need for an organization that would ensure an orderly working arrangement. Manitoba's Department of Agriculture attempted to put its own house in order and in 1905 the Deputy Minister announced a Manitoba circuit embracing most of the fairs, and promised good judges for all that conformed to the proposed plan.

An organization would set higher standards, permit collective bargaining for attractions and generally give the fairs a brighter countenance.

The meeting at which the Western Canada Fair Managers' Association\* was created was sponsored by the Regina Exhibition representative, L. T. McDonald and was held in that city. E. L. Richardson represented Calgary; A. G. Harrison represented Edmonton, W. I. Smale spoke for Brandon, Donald Douglas for Saskatoon and Dr. A. W. Bell, who was chosen to

<sup>\*</sup>Frank Wright, for many years the Manager of North Battleford Fair prepared a useful treatise entitled, "A Few Notations Regarding The Early Days of the Western Canada Fairs Association." Information contained therein and in the files of the Western Association of Exhibitions was most helpful in the preparation of this chapter.



be President, represented Winnipeg. At the meeting, the delegates discussed free passes and colours for prize ribbons. They were worried about the abuse of passes as managers have been ever since. Colours fixed upon for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th prizes were red, blue, white, green and yellow, respectively. And then they resolved to put a stop to the practice adopted by some papers selling subscriptions at the fairs, that of giving a premium of a pair of spectacles with every subscription.

David Douglas of Saskatoon was elected President in 1912 and W. I. Smale of Brandon in 1913. In the latter year the Association members recommended a departure from the policy of holding Dominion Exhibitions. Winnipeg, New Westminster, Regina and Brandon had had such distinction and received the \$50,000 Federal grant that was given to support such an expanded show. But a member fair had to wait too long for its turn and it was agreed that annual government grants to all fairs and exhibitions would be preferable.

In December 1914, D. T. Elderkin became the Association President, and for the first time, decision was made to act jointly in bargaining for midway and platform attractions. It was the beginning of a practice that has been pursued regularly with distinct advantage. Contract for the attractions in that year was awarded to F. M. Barnes at a price of \$1500 for each

exhibition of one week.

According to Association records, the Federal Minister of Agriculture, in the spring of 1915, agreed to financial assistance for fairs of proven standing, including all those that were charter members of the new association formed later in that year. This was considered as a "war measure."

The new organization, created on November 15th and 16th, 1915, was the Western Canada Fairs Association and it represented an amalgamation of the two earlier organizations. The charter members, who were to benefit by the Federal grants included Brandon, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Red Deer, New Westminster, North Battleford and Prince Albert. D. T. Elderkin was President and E. L. Richardson, Secretary.

Distinctly separate circuits were set up in 1918, with separation on the basis of size, but all remained together in the organization until 1923, when it was agreed that the best

interests would be served by having two distinct bodies. Accordingly, the Western Canada Association of Exhibitions and the Western Canada Fairs Association were formed. The "Big Five" prairie Exhibitions became the members of the former, with the objective, as accepted at the time,

".... to promote a spirit of co-operation among the members, to secure unity of action on all matters of common concern, and the general supervision and improvement of the annual exhibitions held by the members of the association."

The two groups, with similar purposes, continued to function independently but to hold their annual meetings at the same time each year, in the City of Winnipeg.

When the Hon. Robert Weir became Minister of Agriculture for Canada, he was particularly anxious that the function and scope of all members in the fair and exhibition structure should be defined. The recognized Western Exhibitions with Class "A" rating were Brandon, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Vancouver and Victoria. Theirs was to be the Inter-Provincial sphere.

The Class "B" Fairs, mostly of the three-day order, were to be regarded as "Regional." Thus they were not expected to cut across Provincial Boundaries to any extent, but it was considered that they might render the most effective service to farming. To rate a place on the Class "B" circuit and qualify for the appropriate Federal Government assistance, a fair was expected to have suitable grounds and buildings, offer prize money totalling at least \$4000 and have gate receipts amounting to \$3000. Without some such minimum standard, exhibitors could not be assured of adequate accommodation or of uniformity in prize lists.

It was only reasonable that the government furnishing grants should exercise some measure of supervision. The Ottawa authorities reserved the right to scrutinize prize lists and they considered it to be their perogative to object to ill-advised departures from Department policy, such as the inclusion of unsuitable breeds and varieties. And the Provincial Government accepted responsibility for proper accounting methods and prohibition of gambling devices.

The Western Canada Fairs Association could boast the biggest circuit of fairs on the continent and could defend another and better boast, that its member fairs were more completely agricultural in cross-section than the larger exhibitions. But while the Class "A" shows remained constant in membership, the Class "B" fairs fluctuated with some member fairs dropping out and others being added.

In the spring of 1940 when it was known that wartime budgets of the Canadian Government had omitted grants to the fairs, it was thought that many of the member shows would be casualties. But a meeting was held in Saskatoon and the decision was unanimous to "carry on"; and the fairs did carry on. Provincial grants were continued, and all the "B" fairs in the midwestern provinces operated in 1941, with the exception of Camrose, whose grounds had been taken over by the military authorities.

The member fairs in the Western Canada Fairs Association in 1950 were Weyburn, Estevan, Moose Jaw, Carman, Portage la Prairie, Yorkton, Melfort, Lloydminster, Vermilion, Vegreville, Red Deer, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Camrose and

Lethbridge.

To be added to that list of Class "B" Fairs in the West, as recognized by the Federal Department of Agriculture, are the British Columbia shows at Chilliwack, Armstrong, and Kamloops. And the Lakehead Exhibition at Fort William and Port Arthur, though holding Associate Membership with the Western Exhibitions, has a "B" classification.

Presidents come and presidents go, but the man who, as perennial Association Secretary from 1934, made the mightiest contribution to the progress of the Western Fairs was Keith Stewart of Portage la Prairie, and Secretary of the Western Canada Association of Exhibitions from 1943, was Mrs. Letta Walsh, of Saskatoon, proving to the world that charm is in no way incompatible with utility.

The Class "C" fairs of the West, mostly one-day events, provided agricultural competition at the neighbour level. They were and are the responsibility of the local Agricultural Societies. Such fairs were numerous until the '30s when their numbers were reduced. Financial difficulties, mechanization of agriculture and a trend to urbanization of farm operators were

the chief reasons for the change in numbers. But those that survived made good records in service to their communities.

Each of the Western Provinces has its Association of Agricultural Societies and counts among its members the locals operating Class "B" and Class "C" Fairs.

It had been hoped that Class "C" Fairs would be feeders for "B" Fairs and the winners at the latter would go on to the Exhibitions. Such a plan worked well on Jersey Island where the total number of shows is small, but it didn't work out according to the ideal in Western Canada because of the crowded fair season. In the pioneer years, all the fairs were held in the months of September and October but in recent decades, nearly all have been crowded into July and the early part of August. A fair season of little more than six weeks forces some of the bigger shows to operate earlier than the small ones which might have been considered as the logical "feeders."

Horse racing and the Summer Fairs operated side by side and in organization they were especially close in their connections. Western pioneers loved nothing better than a horse race, whether it was on a track, the town street or the country road over which they went home from church on Sundays. In early Winnipeg, the best races were on Main Street or on river ice, until Dr. James McKay built a half-mile course at Deer Lodge, in 1878 and called it Buffalo Park.

The early fair programmes listed running races, trotting races, walking races and ox races. Any form of race would take precedence over a pie social or a learned lecture from a visiting scholar. And a summer fair without horse racing was like a Burns Banquet without haggis.

But racing was conducted rather loosely. There were rogues with race horses and sometimes justice suffered. There was need for a regulating body that would exert reasonable control of Thoroughbred breeding and racing. Such an organization was realized with the formation on November 15th, 1924, of the Prairie Thoroughbred Breeders' and Racing Association. The meeting was in Winnipeg, and the first officers were W. R. Allen, President, and A. E. Cross, D. T. Elderkin and J. W. Sifton, Vice-Presidents, representing their respective provinces, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. R. James Speers was



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named Honorary Secretary, a post he was still holding 25 years later. And F. F. Montague, the first Honorary Treasurer, became President in 1944. Mr. Montague held that position until his death in 1950 after which Captain Stanley Harrison of Saskatchewan was named.

The orderly operation of racing presented many problems but in no part of the continent was the standard of conduct higher than in Western Canada. Perhaps Canadians were too close to it to appreciate fully. In the employment of racing officials, none but men of high integrity were considered. George W. Schilling, recognized as one of the best on the continent, officiated as judge at most of the racing meetings at the Western Exhibitions. He brought a lifetime of experience in racing administration and an enthusiasm which his well meaning family members tried unsuccessfully to change in early years by sending the youth to the Orient for a time; but, from that recess, George Schilling returned more eager than ever.

Another key figure in the organized racing was E. D. Adams of Calgary. Born in India, educated in England, initiated to the early West by the Hudson's Bay Company, E. D. Adams went ranching in the Foothills in the early '90s and raised good cattle and fast horses. After breeding Thoroughbreds for a number of years, he was appointed Steward at the prairie races, representing the Prairie Thoroughbred Breeders' and Racing Association. It was this position that Mr. Adams was still occupying with the admiration of the Thoroughbred fraternity in 1950.

New methods were introduced to Western Exhibitions, some for the first time on any circuit. The Stalled Starting Gate was introduced in 1931 and on June 2nd, 1939, the Mechanical Starting Gate, on wheels, was used for the first time, and the Prairie Circuit, which included the Exhibitions, could claim to be first in the world to adopt it. The Western people were likewise among the first to install the "Eye in the Sky Photo, Finish."

When the Prairie Thoroughbred Breeders' and Racing Association celebrated 25 years of active service, it could report that its member associations, mainly the Exhibitions, had paid out six and one-half million dollars in purses, an average of just over a quarter of a million dollars a year. In 1949, the



purses totalled roughly half a million dollars. Beginning in 1926, the Association paid Breeders' Premiums and in 24 years, gave out \$102,650.

Whatever some folk chose to say about racing and about betting, three points stood out; first, that the public loved the races; second, that racing made large tax contributions to government treasuries, and third, that organized racing in Western Canada had been comparatively free from the wicked practices that crept into the sport in some parts of the world.

Those who spoke with the authority of the Exhibitions and the Thoroughbred and Standard Bred organizations, said that racing in Western Canada would be just and dignified.

Governments were generous in their aid to the fairs and exhibitions. Provincial grants were not on a uniform basis but a fairly general principle for many years was an annual payment to Class "B" and Class "C" Fairs of an amount equal to half of the prize money paid to the exhibitors.

A new Dominion policy was adopted in 1945, following discussions between the Department of Agriculture and the Canadian Associations of Exhibitions. It was agreed that Federal assistance in future would take the form of contributions toward the improvement of permanent plants and equipment rather than prize money. No longer would the Department scrutinize prize lists and pass on the eligibility of entries. It was felt that the fairs and exhibitions had matured sufficiently to do such things for themselves.

Thereafter a "B" Fair could qualify for annual payments of up to \$1800 for permanent improvements, \$200 for judges' expenses and \$500 for the support of junior activities. Class "A" organizations might get a maximum of \$3000 for permanent improvements, \$500 for judges and \$500 for programmes with juniors. In the case of Winter Fairs and Spring Shows where gate receipts are usually meagre, grants could range up to \$4000 and be applied to either prize money or permanent improvements, \$500 for judges and \$500 for junior section. To qualify for the maximum grants a Winter Fair would have to show an expenditure of its own of not less than \$5000 on prizes in livestock, poultry, grain, vegetables, fruits, dairy products and honey.

How could new fairs qualify for assistance? To gain Class



"B" recognition, a new fair would require a recommendation from the Department of Agriculture in the Province to be able to show that in the three years prior to time of application, prize money distributed through its agricultural classes, as noted, averaged not less than \$3000. And to graduate from Class "B" to Class "A", a fair needed a recommendation from the Provincial Department of Agriculture and be able to show that the prize money paid out through those agricultural sections, in three previous years, averaged not less than \$6000.

It meant that governments had faith in the fairs and in the organizations administering them.

The principal officers in the two mid-western organizations after formal separation in 1923 were as follows:

Presidents of
Western Canada Association
of Exhibitions

Presidents of Western Canada Fairs Association

of Exhibitions	713300/411012
1923—H. A. Knight, Regina	1 Frank Wright, North Battleford.  G. B. Jameson, Melfort.  V. E. Foster, Camrose.  C. E. Gambles, Prince Albert.  W. T. Moore, Yorkton.  Dr. J. A. Munn, Carman.  R. Patterson, Red Deer.  Fred Zabel, Weyburn.  C. E. Grobb, Portage la Prairie.  M. Alsager, Lloydminster.  I. Dean, Estevan.  H. E. Keddy, Melfort.  C. E. Grobb, Portage la Prairie.  Joseph Trimble, Rotage la Prairie.  Joseph Roden, Vegreville.  W. H. Johnstone, Moose Jaw.  Vic Bjorkland, Red Deer.  F. E. Clark, Carman.  C. S. Lacroix, Prince Albert.
1948—Lee Williams, Edmonton	Prairie.



1949—Dr. F. G. Salisbury, Saskatoon		
Secretaries		
1923-1927-W. I. Stark Edmonton 1922 1922 H. Huyley I loud		
1928-1943—Sid. W. Johns,	minster.	
Saskatoon. 1943- — Mrs. Letta Walsh, Saskatoon.	1932- —Keith Stewart, Portage la Ptairie.	
8	,	
Secretary-Managers of	the Western Exhibitions	
Provincial Exhibition, Brandon:	1882Thomas Lockhart	
•	1897Col. F. J. Clark	
	1908W. I. Smale	
<del>.</del>	1924James E. Rettie	
_ ^ _ % _ %.	1941Miss B. M. Benson	
, ,	1945S. C. McLennan.	
Calgary Exhibition & Stampede:	1886J. G. Fitzgerald	
,	1900John de Sousa	
	1904C. W. Peterson	
•	1906E. L. Richardson	
	1940Charles Yule	
Edmonton Exhibition:	1004	
Extromon:	1901Fraser Tims	
	1906H. R. Montifield	
	1909	
	1928P. W. Abbott	
	1942Charles É. Wilson	
· .	1948James Paul	
Contrator T. 1 2 1 1	•	
Saskatoon Exhibition:	1886Thomas Copland	
	1889James Leslie	
- : 📆	1892 Thomas Copland	
	1896W. P. Bate	
	1897C. L. Falkoner	
	1907Alexander McOwan	
•	1910David Douglas 1914	
	1922S. W. Johns	
	1943Grant MacEwan	
	1946S. N. MacEachern	
Regina Exhibition:		
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	1884William White	
	1895	
•	1898Wm. Trant	
•	1901H. D. Buchanan	
	1902J. K. Hunter	

v."3	1905 A. T. Hunter
~	1905
	1905W. E. Mcadons
ž.	1908 E. B. Andros
	1909 L. T. McDonald
	1913 D. T. Elderkin
	1943 James Grassick
•	1946T. H. McLeod
Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition:	1871
	1891
	1898 F. H. Heubach
	al ver that
	1906
Pacific National Exhibition,	1910James Roy
Vancouver:	1011 H. S. Rolston
valicouver:	1025 T K Matheson
	1937
	short period)
	1937 H. M. King (Acting for
	short period)
	snort period)
•	1938S. C. McLennan
	1946 V. Ben Williams



### CHAPTER XVII

# THAT LITTLE LOCAL FAIR

"If you would help to make the wrong things right, Begin at home; there lies a lifetime toil. Weed your own garden fair for all men's sight Before you plan to till another's soil." Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

HEREIN I SPEAK PERSONALLY ABOUT THAT WESTERN FAIR I knew in boyhood years. Its position in serving the district and furnishing a community outing once a year was exactly the same as that of a hundred other shows on the prairies. Its treatment must reflect sentiment more than history, but a tribute to its service will be a tribute to all the other small fairs, some of which, like this one, became big fairs.

Those who did not experience it could never know the thrill that the farm boy felt on fair day. It was the day of all the year and neither Christmas Day, birthday nor election day could compare with it. It presented more new experiences, more strange noises, more funny smells, more dazzling sights and more new faces than the farm boy would encounter in an average half year. Going back to the hum-drum duties of driving horses and milking cows and grubbing roots, after the fair was not easy; it was like eating dry bread after a feast of raisin pie.

With cattle, horses, pigs and baking powder biscuits to be delivered and shown, it was a busy day as well as an interesting one. That old joy-killer, the alarm clock, sounded at 4 a.m. on fair day and the voice of the elder MacEwan boomed through the house, reminding those sufficiently awake to comprehend that no time could be lost because cattle and pigs must be delivered at the grounds before the heat of the mid-

morning sun.

The best set of harness had been carefully polished the day



before, but there were a hundred jobs that could not be done in advance of departure hour. Overalls were pulled on to furnish some superficial protection to Sunday clothes, and with full knowledge that shoes would not remain clean, they were polished with special care. Then pigs were crated and loaded; feed was bagged and piled above the pig crates and unwilling cows were haltered and tied behind the wagons.

The show horses were hitched and driven, or tied to the hame-rings of the wagon team, and presented no special problem. The pigs, trying to turn in the crates, usually jack-knifed and made blasphemous squeals, but these were as nothing compared to the noises we would hear later in the day.

Cattle presented most of the problems. Without exception they refused to co-operate. They did not want to go to the fair. When the wagon started to move, they braced themselves, lay down and bellowed muffled but nasty sentiments and when they found it possible, broke their halter shanks and bounded to the most remote side of the pasture.

The first exhibitors to arrive at the fair grounds claimed the best stalls or tied to the best trees. There were those exhibitors who herded their cattle to the fair by means of a remuda of stock horses and preferred to make a corral in the bluff so that animals could be lasooed one at a time and introduced to the haunting horrors of a cow halter. What followed was more like a rodeo than a summer fair, but the fair was supposed to be educational and the cattle were receiving their allotment. Spectators and unsolicited advice were abundant and everybody was having fun.

Judging was scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. but never started before eleven. Excitement was mounting. Amateur showmen pleaded with disgruntled cows to look their best, at least to stand still long enough for the judge to recognize some semblance of domestication in the alleged breed. There were times when, for the sake of the judge's wife and children, however, that he too should have been on horseback or had the protection of a Sherman Tank.

The most painful defeats are the ones near home. It was difficult to believe that any other herd bull in the district could or should be placed above our Glenwillow Romeo. And with all the neighbours watching, it was not easy to accept less



than a red ribbon and do it with grace. There had been a mother's warning, however, that sportsmanship was more important than victory and it was a good test in discipline. And if one did not get a reasonably good share of first prizes, there was always some kind friend who could temporize with the thought that "the judge is of the white-collared variety and must be pardoned for a certain number of mistakes".

Size in livestock and other things, ruled in those years. None but big potatoes could command any respect and always there was a pumpkin or a squash that would fill a bushel basket and was said to be "the biggest in the world". We knew we did not have the biggest fair but it was nice to fix upon some distinction and who was to dispute the claim that we

had the biggest pumpkin of all time?

The biggest horses, the biggest bulls and the biggest pigs had a distinct advantage. Bill McAughey's Shorthorn bull was supposed to weight twenty-four hundred pounds and won the special prize of a set of reinforced whiffletrees for "the best bull of any breed on the grounds", three years in a row. The compact Aberdeen Angus did not rate so high when size

counted for so much.

In the pig department was a polyglot of colours. All the breeds of the corn-fed, lard group were present, fat, indifferent, lazy and often without issue. The Poland Chinas, the Duroc Jerseys, Chester Whites and Hampshires had their admirers. The Berkshires, with faces like Pekinese pups and Tamworths with snouts ideal for digging potatoes, grunted with an air of superiority; and the Yorkshires which had not yet been adopted for special trumpeting by the Canadian Department of Agriculture, enjoyed no social advantage over the swine of other colours. To make the menagerie complete, a few specimens of the strange and unusual Mule-Foot pigs, supposed to be immune to hog cholera, appeared one year. But cholera had never been known in that part and spectators were more interested in the undivided hooves than any shaky claims to disease immunity.

The horse ring was really the centre of attraction. Unruly colts, spirited draughters, glamorous drivers and obstreperous stallions added their peculiar touches and there were those families who ate their picnic lunches there beside the horse

ring so they wouldn't lose their places when judging was resumed for the afternoon. Informed horsemen were supposed to be able to name the sires of all the best entries, and the colts by Flash Baron, by Baron's Pride, were supposed to have a congenital advantage in the draft classes. At least that was the view of all those who did not hold a Syndicate Share in the lumbering Captain Tom. But the relative merits of those two local stallions, their hocks, their bone, their action and offspring, made touchy conversation.

While the horse show held the spotlight, no sane person could have believed that at the greatly expanded and matured fair, held on the same grounds in 1949, only six head of draft horses would be shown. The interest was in other departments and if the names of those two departed celebrities, Flash Baron and Captain Tom, had been screamed over the public address system, none but a handful of old timers would have recognized them.

We sometimes exhibited seed grain but in wheat there was one sample, shown repeatedly for five years, that was considered unbeatable. The bachelor owner with nothing else to do, had spent all one winter hand picking it and there was no rule to prevent him from bringing it back year after year to repeat his championship: Such was not uncommon in the Ladies' Work Department. The cookies and the cakes were supposed to belong to a contemporary generation, but in fancy work, there was no proof that some of the pieces had not won at the World's Fair at Paris. One farmer from the north whose wife had been dead long since, remembered her at least once a year by exhibiting her hooked mat. It was invariably good for a red card and a dollar prize, until moths sabotaged the masterpiece.

Judging having been completed, the squealing pigs, lowing cattle and whinnying horses were silenced temporarily with feed. Then leaving their elders to argue about the judge's placings, boys shed their overalls, whisked the less tenacious dirt from their shoes with a handful of hay and disappeared to lose themselves in less familiar but more exciting departments of the fair.

Machinery row held some attractions, and we had to see the ball-game, especially if Tom Redman was pitching for the Pleasant Valley team. Neither the grand champion Clydesdale stallion nor the imported judges from the University could command as much youthful admiration as was breathed for that hero of the baseball diamond.

There were sideshows, and if the farm boy had to choose between a two-headed calf show and a two-legged girl show, his agricultural interests were easily restrained. If the decision was not an easy one, it was because the girl show cost fifteen cents while the calf monstrosities could be seen for ten.

Deep in the lad's thoughts that day, was the hope that he would meet up with one of the neighbourhood daughters or hired girls who would be trying desperately but unsuccessfully to hide her need for masculine attention. Sooner or later the meeting was sure to take place, much to the relief of both parties. Courting was part of the fair and sometimes the farm boy was missing when it came time to start home with the cattle.

There were so many things that a boy and girl could do together; they could visit the fortune-teller; they could have their pictures taken as they held hands and sat on the thin end of a new moon or they could buy a ride on something resembling a merry-go-round, which at best was about half as thrilling as a fast ride on an empty hay-rack. They could buy peanuts, lollypops, popcorn or a mysterious brand of candy floss that resembled a web-worm's cocoon and tasted somewhat better.

Everybody attending a fair in those days, went home with some treasure, bought at half its value. The novelty specialist offered an invention for peeling potatoes at double the time-honoured speed and a long-haired "Professor" sold a cure for baldness, or a bottled medicine guaranteed to have the same effect upon the human body as a rebore job and general over-haul on the old car. The local wholesaler in drugs betrayed the Medicine Man's secret, however, and the word spread quickly that any qualities of magic in the health-giving concoction were due to either the Epsom salts, the colouring matter or the flavouring that went into the water, because there was nothing else.

For the young man, nothing presented greater possibilities than the pocket-sized gadget, supposed to possess wonders far

beyond those of a submarine's periscope. Placed at a keyhole, it should reveal everything on the inside, to the eye of the owner. It appeared cheap enough at 50 cents, but as time was to prove, the money would have been better invested in peanuts.

For the girls there was a perfume, promising husband, home and happiness. The fur trapper had employed scents to lure his victims into traps; why should the girls overlook the possibilities? The noisy salesman called his product "Matrimony Assured" or something like that and made what seemed a most reasonable offer in distributing those bottles of dollar value, "pay 50 cents now and mail the balance to the manufacturer in Toronto, after you get a husband."

The fair offered a wide variety of experiences. They could not all be good. But experience is a good teacher and some of us learned that in spending our money, we should depend upon our own judgment more than upon the claims of a transient salesman. The person who paid 50 cents for a keyhole periscope that wouldn't work, was less likely to buy a city property at Aklavik.

When the excitement of fair day was subsiding, we had the cattle and other exhibits to take home. The animals were tired of it all and went back to the home pastures with more speed and alacrity than they displayed on the outward journey. Otherwise, for tired and weary travellers, Napoleon's Retreat from Moscow bore a striking similarity as we approached the end of a nineteen hour day. Swollen and blistered feet were protesting too many hours in newish boots normally reserved for church attendance. It was never very easy to get "dollar ninety-eight" dress boots that had more than a suggestive reresmblance to the shape and size of my feet anyway.

Remorse in some form could not help following such a mixture of pleasures. Sore feet was but one of the penalties; indigestion might be another, and when the silver coins remaining in the little square purse were counted, there were some soul-searching questions about the wisdom of it all. When at the MacEwan breakfast on a morning following a fair, I confessed that my escapades had involved the spending of ninety cents, I was told by an earnest parent that if I thought I was making an impression upon a certain feminine



heart, it was time I realized that no really good girl would

approve of such reckless spending.

But there was much that was good arising from Fair Day. It was a welcome and needed change and sometimes it was the only deviation from monotonous farm work that the summer afforded. Coupled with the peanuts, the fortune telling, the neighbour girls and the candy floss, there was experience in realities that led to a change of viewpoint about many things. The herd bull appeared in a new light and invariably there was a pronouncement that the next one must be a better one. We had seen mowing machines of different makes standing side by side and made up our minds about which would suit us best. We saw new varieties of seeds and vegetables and had proof that certain fruits would grow on Carrot River Valley soil. We saw what neighbours were doing and compared notes with them. Unless he turned his back upon it all deliberately, impressionable youth could not help benefiting from that annual outing.

That little fair became a bigger fair. Directors cut down the poplar trees to which we tied the cattle, and built stables. They fixed up the racetrack and saw Battle Axe begin a famous racing career. They extended the fair to three days and it served a bigger area, became a testing ground for North Central Saskatchewan. There came a day when it could boast the biggest and one of the best pig competitions in the entire province and then it added an annual Fall Swine Show and Sale that commanded national recognition. It gave strong support to the junior sections of the fair and may have had the biggest Farm Girls Camp in all Canada. In 1936 the Farm Girls in the camp numbered 361, and in 1939, the count was 342.

Melfort's Fair became a big thing in that section of the West and some of us have a debt to it and a lot of pleasant memories about it. But before it became big, that little local fair, like a lot of other little local fairs, was a great social institution.





## CHAPTER XVIII

a

## **CARRY ON**

"When we build, let us think we build forever. Let it not be for the present delight nor for present use alone. Let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for, and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when these stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say as they look upon the labour and wrought substances of them, 'see! This work our fathers did for us'."

John Ruskin.

Dozens of fairs and exhibitions in Western Canada could trace to beginnings prior to 1890 but not many could claim unbroken records of annual show events. Two or three economic depressions and two World Wars were disrupting agents, and the old enemies, lethargy and stagnation set in to spoil a few otherwise good records as sponsoring societies lost the vigor of youthfulness.

The depression of the '90s, in the course of which farming and industry suffered, brought discouragement to the fairs and some of them suspended active operations for a few years. And during the lean and dry '30s, many of the smaller fairs ceased to operate, some to remain inactive. Saskatchewan fairs, like Saskatchewan farmers felt the hardships of that period most severely; Saskatchewan had 132 Class "C" Fairs in 1928 and only 48 in 1948.

For the failure of certain Agricultural Societies to recover following the poverty-marked '30s, however, there were various reasons in addition to drought and depression. Important changes were occurring in the farming community. A swing

toward greater mechanization and wheat farming in many districts, an increase in non-resident farmers or "suit-case" farmers and a tendency toward bigger farms were factors that made it increasingly difficult for local institutions like rural schools, country churches and small agricultural societies. Coupled with these was a lack of leadership in some instances.

There was yet another reason for deterioration in some organizations. Too many of the Agricultural Societies considered the conduct of a one-day fair as their only responsibility. Survival was greatest among societies which vigorously conducted Field Days, Farm Tours, Seed Fairs, Machinery Demonstrations, Poultry Shows and Junior Club events along with their Summer Fairs.

More annual fairs and exhibitions may not be needed and local Agricultural Societies need not always consider the operation of an annual fair as their chief reason for existence. But small and intensely rural Agricultural Societies had and have the advantage of proximity to farm problems and farm audiences and thus a big work to do, whether an annual fair happened to be a part of the programme or not.

War changes many things. At the beginning of the Second World War, as the economic and social structure of the nation was being revised, the exhibitions and fairs of Canada declared their determination to serve in whatever capacity the government considered to be best. Representatives of the Western Association of Exhibitions waited upon Canada's Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable James Gardiner, at Regina (on April 28, 1943) and heard him say that the fairs and exhibitions should "carry on" as long as they found it possible, giving encouragement and direction in the food programme and offering entertainment and relaxation to tired workers.

Edmonton and Vancouver had no choice. Their exhibition plants were taken over completely by the Department of National Defence and both were obliged to suspend exhibitions for several years. Other associations gave their buildings and grounds to wartime needs but were able to recover them temporarily at fair season and thus continue under handicap to operate their fairs.

There were other difficulties, lots of them. Railroad rolling stock was under rigid control. In April 1943, the Transport



Controller for Canada ruled that fairs and exhibitions might use the regular freights to meet their needs but there could be no special trains. Help was scarce; meat, butter and sugar needed by caterers were in short supply and gasoline was rationed. Many of the Carnival Companies were unable to bid for business. But the dynamic Patty Conklin, who literally started with peanuts, at five cents a bag, and built a million dollar show business, did the impossible, packed an acceptable midway into eight baggage cars and delivered regularly to the Class "A" Exhibitions, 1941 to 1945, inclusive.

Exhibition managers knew it would have been easier to quit the fairs for a year or more, but all the bigger exhibitions, which could do it, carried on. When the Honourable James Gardiner officially opened the Saskatoon Exhibition in 1943,

he said:

"You are doing well in attempting to carry on your beneficial contribution to agriculture throughout the War period. . . . . . The activities of the Exhibition Board throughout the years in promoting the improvement of livestock has done much to lay the foundation for remarkable production of livestock products in these war years.'

Hon. Colin Gibson, Minister of National Revenue for Canada, opened the Regina Exhibition that year and expressed much the same sentiment, that the fairs and exhibitions were in a position to offer worthwhile support to the war effort as

well as a continuous aid to agriculture and industry.

The war years were difficult years in many ways but as it turned out, they marked the beginning of a period in which the fairs enjoyed greater monetary reward. The onset of war, coinciding as it did with the end of a series of depression years, found many exhibitions carrying heavy burdens of debt. But with the return of farm prosperity, full employment and good management, the fairs and exhibitions climbed rapidly from poverty to riches. More than one exhibition with debt of over a hundred thousand dollars in 1942 emerged, five years later, free from debt and with substantial cash reserves.

Many are the obstacles that can and will beset a public institution like a fair. Moose Jaw Feeder Show afforded an

example. Operating annually in the month of October, since inception in 1923, it experienced a varied range of obstacles that coincided most awkwardly with one show period or another. About the worst October snow storm in the history of the West struck during Moose Jaw Show one year; there was a packing-house workers' strike to worry about another year; then there were one farm strike, one American embargo, one major shortage of freight cars, one serious market glut and other discouraging circumstances but Moose Jaw carried on.

Continuity is important and something to boast about. When Armstrong Fair celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1950, it could show a record of a fair every year during its life. Brandon had an unbroken record and so did Carman and some other fairs.

In the production of human food there can be no stopping; in the effort to improve farming there should be no relaxing and in the agricultural contests and demonstrations that point up quality and efficiency in production, there should be no halting.

The fairs and exhibitions of Western Canada are dedicated to service. They have no other purpose. No tangible profit can accrue directly or indirectly to directors, many of whom give time to the work of their committees throughout the year. The fairs may show a profit but no dividends are paid to shareholders. Profits go toward improvements or into exhibition projects.

No person is likely to argue that all the policies pursued by the fairs and exhibitions have been the best. Mistakes have been made. But mistakes need not be repeated and faults can be righted. The fairs and exhibitions can be made better. They must go forward, lending guidance and encouragement and recreation. They can do much in bringing urban and rural people together to the benefit of all. They can and should be speak more clearly that which is best in the character of the country. They can and should be inspirational and continuous.

## CHAPTER XIX

## A CHARGE FOR TOMORROW

"Then work and win! for the world is wide, And its doors will open on every side; Look not on the past with vain regret, For the best things haven't happened yet."

Margaret Scott Hall.

VIGOUR CHARACTERIZED THE EARLY FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS of Western Canada, as it characterized the pioneer settlers who started them. The need was clear; those early years presented big work in leadership, a work that could not wait and could not be completed. No fair, even in this day, is likely to overtake its reasonable responsibilities in giving leadership.

As originally constituted, the fairs and exhibitions of the West were almost wholly agricultural. With passing years the programmes became diversified, with increasing emphasis upon industry and entertainment. With variety there could be no quarrel although it was important that a proper balance should be maintained. The fairs and exhibitions should be in tune with Canadian life but pointing ever forward.

Basically, the fairs should be educational. They should be places at which citizens would find it profitable as well as amusing to attend. The judging ring should be a public demonstration as much as a place of competition. Any fair that offers seats for the races and none for the judging ring should examine itself critically and enquire if it has a just claim to public support. And any modern fair that fails to equip the judging ring with a public address system will invite doubt about its sincerity and purpose. For too long the workings in the ring went uninterpreted for the bystanders. Professor Thomas Shaw, who judged the dairy cattle classes at Winnipeg in 1893, was the first to break the silence of the ring by giving his reasons for all to hear. If a man has the capacity to judge,

he should have the ability to share his reasons and the sagacity to know when to speak. There is something constructive that could be said about every class.

Agriculture and industry are ever changing. Some of the machines of production and varieties of plants considered ultramodern in 1920 were outmoded in 1950. Because a certain department of the fair was a feature in 1940 is no reason for its existence in 1960. The fact that black pigs and Leicester sheep were favored at Portage la Prairie in 1872 is no reason for perpetuating them. The pattern changes and while new departments must be added, others should be dropped. Thus no fair deserving of public favor can "coast." Aggressiveness is fundamental. For the person who travels a hundred miles or more to see a fair, the disappointment is understandable if he finds nothing new except the music. There must be no relaxing by those who make policies.

To make its aggressive leadership most effective, every fair should maintain liaison with the Experimental Farms and Universities where research is conducted. Nothing but cooperation at that level can be good enough. When a Fair or Exhibition has nothing "new" or "better" to show, it might consider closing its gates or going exclusively into carnival business. Even at the price of reduced popularity, the policy of the fairs should be one of advanced and courageous planning. If there are too many breeds of sheep, with some of them superfluous, the Fairs and Exhibitions should be bold in removing the less promising of them from the public eye. If overfitting of breeding stock is wrong, the fairs should take a determined stand against it. If the draft horse must adapt itself to a drastically changed set of needs and conditions, the fairs should not be the agents guilty of perpetuating outdated and perhaps false ideals about importance and most appropriate types.

Criticism has been heard from time to time that Fairs and Exhibitions lose sight of commercial realities, that prizes go too often to good fit rather than to inherent usefulness. However unfair some of that criticism may have been, it is positively clear that show rings should guard against the danger of being carried away by fancies and fads. Sentiment is to be encouraged in Agriculture, but utility must be underlined. There



is no place for false standards in classes that are supposed to represent utility.

At the heart of every Fair and Exhibition in the agricultural sections of Canada should be livestock and the products of the soil. It does not mean that all else should be excluded. Perchance, at a time in the future, some Agricultural Society will find a means of holding a Summer Fair that is all-agricultural in character. It can be done in certain parts of the world. No doubt it could be done in this part, but planners should enquire about the desirability of such. It would be a Winter Fair held in the summer and valuable as the Winter Fairs have become, the Summer Fairs have something else to do. Indeed, the students are likely to conclude that if the Summer Fair is to fulfil its best function, it should be an expression of Canadian life and that means a variegated pattern.

It is well to be practical. Nobody admires utility more than the agricultural people. The physical achievements in this young country are tribute to practical people. But there is such a thing as being practical to the point of cheating the fine qualities in Canadian life. An institution entrusted with leader-

ship and guidance should not forget the cultural things.

In this vast agricultural area where national character and traditions typically Western have not been recognized adequately, what could be more important than to remind the people of the riches and glories that belong to the young nation? The music, the entertainment and the ideals should reflect the Canadian personality. As far as possible, everything at the fair should give support to Canadian industry, Canadian culture and the Canadian way of life. The message of the fair must be spoken in the Canadian accent.

Let every fair and exhibition manager ask himself, "how does my institution rate in lofty inspiration?" "How good is the music?" "What refining influences are at work?" The most valuable features of any show will be the inspirational. Perhaps the pony classes for boys and girls, the junior pet classes bringing out dogs, rats and cats, the art displays and the flower classes may be as important as the pig classes.

A distinctive Canadian sportsmanship on playing field and in show ring could be a most worthy objective. Fairs and Exhibitions should lose no opportunity in placing the sport of a



competition above it commercialization. On the delightful little Island of Jersey, where show ring traditions are interwoven with the making of a world famous breed, cash prizes are almost wholly absent. Trophies formed the basic awards and any suggestion of professionalizing the show ring met with a frown.

In Canada, with great distances and correspondingly high expenses facing the exhibitors, especially in livestock, cash prizes were found to be essential and had to be substantial in order to ensure displays and competitions. That, however, did not reduce the hope of elevating the red ribbon of the ring well above the dollar prize. The show ring should seek to retain the best features of amateur sport. And for the boys and girls, in whose cases professionalization should be avoided rigidly, a prize reward of a two-dollar book that would remain with them would seem to be more appopriate than a two-dollar bill that will vanish quickly enough.

One Western Exhibition has included among its annual awards, a recognition of "Good Sportsmanship In And Around the Judging Ring." The winners each year are selected by secret committee and the awards have gone to people who have

helped to give the Canadian show ring a high tone.

Fun and frolic are essential ingredients and as long as these are offered in a healthful and decent manner, they are to be encouraged. They may be subtle agents working for the better-ment of the social and economic life, but they should never be allowed to dominate the fair's first purpose, that of serving as a "parade ground" for the products of farms and industry. To maintain a proper balance between the educational and the entertainment features will be one of the Fair Board's problems. Too much sugar can spoil the porridge.

Criticism about the entertainment features of the fairs is

not new. From the very beginning in the West, certain fairs came under editorial attack because of the "sideshows." But the general tendency was to agree with an editor writing in 1894 (Farmer's Advocate, June 20, 1894):

"Now and then some agricultural writer will bemoan the degeneration which has taken place and call on the directors to expel the horse trot, baby shows, pig races, turkey and chicken goose and duck races,



cheap Johns, fakirs, sideshows, balloon ascensions, etc. But it cannot be done. The more nonsense the better . . ."

The fairs must cater to a wide range of tastes and wholesome entertainment has an important place. Indecent entertainment and sharp practices have no place. Back in 1907, the Farmer's Advocate said what could be repeated today:

"As a public Canadians are intensely moral; whatever vices they may display in private, they do not relish the parading of vulgar, coarse or insidious acts before their gaze."

Experience has shown clearly that people will laugh at acts of which they would not approve, and many of those who laugh will be the first to condemn. Degrading acts are a poor investment for any fair. The Fairs and Exhibitions should be uplifting in influence; they can be of the people but ever ahead.

The fact that games of skill and games of chance have been sources of revenue to the fairs and have thus become a tradition is no reason for tolerating any concession that is a threat to fine sensibilities or violates trust. Even the need for funds with which to support the agricultural end of the show is not sufficient reason for permitting the operation of stands that are not clean and fair. The time seems to be at hand for a firm stand against all concessions where there is trickery. The fair has responsibility in safeguarding the dollars and cents in the pockets of innocent visitors, and an association conducting an agricultural show cannot be the agent of public welfare and progress in one department while tolerating, if not condoning, rackets in another. The best Fairs and Exhibitions will be alert always to root out evils that might nullify the primary purposes and bring pride to nobody.

Well over a million people pay admission to the Summer Fairs and Exhibitions of Western Canada each year. All seem to have fun. Some come mainly for the races, some for the baseball tournaments or bucking horses, and some for other forms of entertainment. But a few hundred thousand visitors come with a firm desire for benefit, to obtain a close-up view of the world's best livestock, to see labour-saving devices, to sense the industrial growth of a nation, inspect governmental



and other educational exhibits, exchange friendships and become physically tired and mentally refreshed. Their edification is the prime challenge.

Admonitions are plentiful, and it is easy to see how institutions can be bettered. The fact remains that the Fairs and Exhibitions of Western Canada have a glowing record of service. They have been fortunate in the people who manage and direct. In their hands is the task of prescribing a mixed diet of education and entertainment for city and rural people, some of whom have no other summer vacation than the day or days at the Fair.

A good manager is half showman, and half academic explorer. He has as much zeal for agriculture and industry and national uplift as for the click of the turnstiles. And to maintain the best exhibition traditions he adds new features each year, features that are progressive, honest and clean.

